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Daily Report
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Inter-Arab Affairs

Inter-Arab Affairs: 'Heated Arguments' Reported as Arab League Views Summit

NC1903094196 Cairo AL-SHA'B in Arabic 15 Mar 96 p 1

[Report by Rabi' Shahin]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Arab League headquarters was yesterday the scene of heated arguments and discussions revolving around the Sharm al-Shaykh summit. The main parties to the arguments were the foreign ministers of Egypt, Syria, Palestine, and Lebanon.

Faruq Qaddumi, the head of the PLO's political department, described the summit as a farce, one in which he could have taken no part. He said he personally boycotted the summit because the name was wrong in the first place. He added that he was not prepared to take part in a demonstration of support for Peres.

Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' said the summit served Israel more than it did the Arabs. He added: Had the idea of the summit been studied more carefully and had Syria been certain that it would address all regional issues objectively, it would not have hesitated to take part in it.

Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa commented, saying: Egypt has expressed both the Syrian and Arab interests. He added that the coordination that preceded the summit involved 14 states. It reflected the Arab position and adopted a unified line taking various interests into consideration, he said.

Musa added: The summit addressed every aspect of terrorism. The real gain would be an Israeli withdrawal from all the occupied territories and the recognition of the Palestinian right to self-determination. He remarked that Syria's presence would have been a significant advantage for the summit.

Al-Shar' responded that Syria targets [as published] Egypt and that historic relations between the two people are solid and firm. He added that he heard an explanation of what went on at the summit during his talks with 'Amr Musa. He remarked that the talks revealed much.

Lebanese Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz said Lebanon's and Syria's boycott of the summit will isolate neither. He said that Israel exercises every form of terrorism against the Lebanese people. Hence, it could not take part in meetings that discussed terrorism from one angle and ignored the practices of the other party, he said.

Islamic Affairs

Islamic Affairs: Iran, Sudan, Islamic Groups Discussed

96LH0113A Paris AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI in Arabic 1 Dec 95 pp 26-27

[FBIS Translated Text] Khartoum—The Afghan conflict, whether during the war against the Soviet colonialists or the civil war between the brother enemies and former comrades in arms, has undoubtedly affected Pakistan during the past five years.

The security and political tension in neighboring Kabul has undoubtedly created a suitable atmosphere in Pakistan to exert influence or gain supporters in Kabul by backing certain parties and trends.

Anyone following the course of Pakistani politics will not be surprised about the situation in that large Islamic country, which, by virtue of its proximity and the interaction of its people with the Afghan people, has become involved in making many important political decisions in Kabul. Therefore, people who knew what was going on in this country thought that the explosion at the Egyptian Embassy in Islamabad on 19 November was natural and expected.

Why has Islamabad become the preferred arena of the Islamic groups, which have declared their responsibility for the explosion? What is the connection between the successive defeats suffered by the forces of Afghan Prime Minister Golboddin Hekmatyar and the Egyptian Embassy explosion?

Was the conflict between some wings of the Pakistani Islamic Group, mainly between its leader Qadi Hoseyn and Ghafur Ahmad's wing, the reason for selecting the Egyptian Embassy as the target of that explosion?

Did Fatimah Rafsanjani's surprise visit to Khartoum and her meeting with [National Islamic Front leader] al-Turabi and [Sudanese President] al-Bashir have something to do with supporting the perpetrators of the treacherous incident?

What went on in the Islamic fundamentalist meeting, which took place last month in Lahore, the second largest Pakistani city? This meeting was attended by Ayman al-Zawahiri, leader of the Egyptian al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyah, who lives in Geneva; Shaykh Sayyid Ahmad, former governor of the Sudanese Central Bank; Nafi' 'Ali Nafi', former head of the Sudanese security service; Qadi Hoseyn, the guide of the Pakistani Islamic Group; and Reza Sahimi, official in charge of military industrialization in the Iranian military establishment.

Former Sudanese President Ja'far Numayri told AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI by telephone that he is ready

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to use his long experience to fight the new renegades. He said that he has confirmed information about the existence of an international terrorist network, with cells in every Islamic country, whose aim is to cause disturbances. This network maintains direct contact with the central strategic command in Khartoum.

A source in the Alliance of Working People's Forces, which is led by Numayri, gave AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI information about the network that carried out the criminal attack against the Egyptian Embassy in Islamabad on 19 November.

The source said that following the painful blows received by the forces of Golboddin Hikmatyar and their retreat from some positions captured by the pro—Pakistani Taliban Battalions, many Arab Afghans from Egypt, Algeria, and Sudan, who fought with the forces of the Afghan prime minister, left and settled in cities near the Pakistani-Afghan border. They then moved to special training centers in Lahore to regroup and return to Kabul with the help of the militia of Qadi Hoseyn, leader of the Islamic group in Pakistan.

The source added that most of the Arab Afghans, who settled in Lahore following the defeat of Hekmatyar's forces, were from Egypt and Sudan and did not want to return to their countries. They stayed in Pakistan, hoping to go to Bosnia. The Islamic Arab People's Congress, which maintains a liaison office in Islamabad under the management of Qadi Hoseyn, a prominent member in al-Turabi's fundamentalist organization, printed many donation certificates to finance the jihad effort in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the transportation of the mojahedin there.

When these Egyptian and Sudanese fighters discovered that they will not be going to Europe, because the donations were not enough to move one-tenth of the total number, they joined several opposition Pakistani groups, such as the Islamic League Party and the Mohajirin Movement. They spread out in Karachi and Hyderabad, but kept in close touch with the command of the Islamic Arab People's Congress. They maintained their personal loyalty to al-Turabi, but not to the machines of his fundamentalist activity.

The Sudanese source said that the dispersion of the Arab fundamentalists in Hyderabad, Karachi, and Lahore has pushed the old dispute between Islamic Group General Guide Qadi Hoseyn and his deputy Ghafur Ahmad to the forefront. Ghafur Ahmad accused the general guide of embracing al-Turabi's followers, despite the harsh conditions under which the Islamic group was living. The dispute came to the open following the Egyptian Embassy incident, when Ghafur Ahmad denounced the operation and accused the perpetrators of deviating from Islam and violating the simplest principles of humanity. The Islamic group's general guide maintained total silence about the incident and never issued a negative or a positive statement about it.

The Sudanese parties and forces abroad issued statements denouncing and condemning the Islamabad incident. The Sudanese Government, however, did not even send a cable of condolence to Egypt.

Muhammad al-Mu'tasim Hakim, member of the political bureau of the Democratic Unionist Party, told AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI that Sudan and Iran were behind all the incidents and disturbances in the area. He revealed that the National Grouping services have recently monitored increased activity by the cells of Usamah Bin-Ladin, who lives in Khartoum, and the arrival in Khartoum of the prominent leaders of these cells from Yemen, Peshawar, and Lahore. He added that during the past two weeks, Bin-Ladin received Mustafa Hamzah and Rifa'i Ahmad Taha, members of the Egyptian Islamic al-Jihad Organization, in his home in al-Manshiyah. They both carry Sudanese passports. Hakim did not rule out the possibility that they had a role in the explosion incident.

Meanwhile, John Garang's Sudan People's Liberation Forces have intensified their attacks against the positions of the Sudanese Army in southern Sudan, which is backed by the National Islamic Front's popular defense forces and the al-Rahman Legion, a force composed of Arab Afghans from different nationalities who returned to Sudan when the Afghan war against the Soviet presence ended.

As on the military level, there has also been an escalation on the political level led by Abil Alair [as transliterated], a moderate southern politician who served in the past as Sudanese vice president and now serves as a judge in the International Court of Justice. He and four other southern politicians sent a note to President al-Bashir demanding that the government should grant the people in southern Sudan the right to self-determination according to the resolutions of the Asmara Conference.

During this time, Fatimah Rafsanjani, daughter of the Iranian president, arrived in Khartoum at the head of an 80-member delegation. The delegation included Deputy Defense Minister Mahdi Shamran, Colonel Reza Sahimi, official in charge of military industrialization in the Iranian Army; Iranian Consultative Assembly members; officials of the Islamic Guidance Ministry; and some intelligence service members.

Despite the blackout imposed on the visit and the Sudanese media's attempt to call it ordinary, the visit

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was not ordinary, considering that it was made by an important envoy as the daughter of the Iranian president. Fatimah Rafsanjani met with al-Turabi and al-Bashir and handed them written messages from the Iranian president and leader of the Iranian Revolution Khamene'i.

Sudanese opposition sources in Cairo say that the visit was necessary to complete the deal discussed two weeks earlier in the Pakistani city of Lahore between Sudan's former Security Service Chief Nafi' 'Ali Nafi' and retired Governor of the Sudanese Central Bank Shaykh Sayyid Ahmad, on the one hand, and Egyptian al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyah Leader Ayman al-Zawahiri and Iranian Military Industrialization Official Reza Sahimi, on the other. The Lahore meeting was held under the auspices of Qadi Hoseyn, general guide of the Pakistani Islamic Group.

The sources said that the Sudanese Government initiated this meeting because it badly needed military equipment to check the military advance of Garang's forces, which have captured nine southern towns. The government initiated the meeting after China refused to supply the Sudanese forces with weapons unless the government paid for previous weapons' shipments.

The same informed sources said that Tehran sent its military industrialization official to the meeting to tell Khartoum that it was prepared to supply it with what it needs, provided Khartoum carries out some operations by providing support or facilities.

According to our sources, Tehran wanted Egyptian al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyah Leader Ayman al-Zawahiri to be present in this meeting. It also wanted Qadi Hoseyn, head of the liaison bureau of the Islamic Arab People's Congress, to be present so everything would be done with the approval of this organization and the blessing of Dr. al-Turabi.

The sources thought that the Egyptian Embassy explosion was one of the operations discussed at the Lahore meeting. The terrorists apparently were unable to penetrate the security cordon in Egypt, so they turned their attention to targets outside Egypt.

Nafi' 'Ali Nafi' was relieved of his position following the abortive attempt to assassinate the Egyptian president in Addis Ababa on 26 June. Shaykh Sayyid Ahmad, the second member in that meeting, is a retired governor of the Sudanese Central Bank. He was the youngest governor of the bank since independence. After he was pensioned off, he established a currency exchange network in cooperation with former Finance Minister Ibrahim Hamdi and in coordination with Jewish financial institutions in the United States and East Asia.

The question remains: Did the operation take place after the arms deal was carried out? Addressing his supporters, on Harvest Day, the Sudanese president spoke about "the autumn of wrath," referring to the regular army's offensive against the positions of Garang's forces. What role did Khartoum play in supporting or facilitating the operation or will Khartoum's role be manifested in future operations?

Political Islam Review: AL-SHA'B 12 Mar

NC1603211096

[FBIS Report] The following is a comprehensive review of all items in the 12 March edition of the Arabic language newspaper AL-SHA'B that pertain to political Islamic issues.

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1. Writer Views Sharm al-Shaykh Summit
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WRITER VIEWS SHARM AL-SHAYKH SUMMIT

Majdi Ahmad Husayn's 5,000-word article on page 2 examines the Sharm al-Shaykh summit that would be held "tomorrow, Wednesday" in order "to commit one of the biggest crimes against this people and be a flagrant violation of all national, pan-Arab, and Islamic values."

He relates how "ruling regimes kneeled before Israel one after the other, leaving Jerusalem and all Palestine under occupation" and how the Palestinians, "finding themselves alone in the battlefield, invented that fearful technique of using booby-trapped men."

However, he notes that "at this particular moment, our bold rulers are moving to save Israel, consolidate its occupation, and declare a united front with it against the Palestinian people and their Islamic [Resistance] movement, Hamas."

Noting that Clinton demanded the convocation of this conference "to fight terrorism," he points out that the official Egyptian media "tried to insinuate that it was an Egyptian idea." Either way, he sees the idea as "a disaster by all standards."

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"In the name of fighting terrorism, they join the occupiers camp to strike at the Palestinian national movement, assist the Zionists in maintaining their occupation of Jerusalem and all Palestine, and organize a conference on Egyptian soil that urges security cooperation among Egypt, Israel, and the self-rule authority to strike at Hamas. And while they are at it, they consolidate security, political, and strategic cooperation against all the Islamic powers in the region, primarily Iran and Sudan," Husayn writes, wondering how Egypt can "turn at the hands of the rulers into a springboard for strikes against the nation of monotheism."

He notes that the United Nations excludes liberation movements from acts of terrorism. He says, however, that the organization has become "hostile to Islam and Muslims" and that the UN Security Council issued "an unprecedented resolution condemning Hamas operations." He also notes the world's silence on crimes against Muslims in Bosnia, Chechnya, Palestine, and Lebanon.

He asks Arab rulers where their dignity and pride were when they "capitulated to the Israeli nuclear terrorism" and when the Israelis "kept 'Amr Musa waiting for almost an hour" at the Rafah border gate when he was on his way to Gaza. "Are you not ashamed of yourselves now that you have become a tool serving Peres and Clinton in their electoral campaigns and have destroyed the meaning of elections and democracy in your own homeland," he asks Arab rulers.

Husayn says that the recent Israeli measures were actually a "reoccupation" of Gaza and the West Bank and an "abrogation of the Declaration of Principles with the Palestinians."

The writer notes that some analysts view the Sharm al-Shaykh conference as "an American attempt to provide an alternative (Arab rulers' cooperation to strike at Hamas) to reassure Israel and substitute its plans." He points out that these plans include raids against Iranian military installations, mass expulsion of Hamas loyalists to south Lebanon, large-scale military operations in south Lebanon, and assassinations of Hamas and Jihad leaders in Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Iran, Sudan, and other states.

Husayn also notes the Israeli aggression against south Lebanon and Israel's refusal to comply with the UN resolution in that connection. "Are there not men among you who call for a summit in Sharm al-Shaykh to discuss Israel's occupation of south Lebanon, the Golan, and all Palestine," he asks Arab rulers.

The writer cites "an important study in the American Foreign Affairs magazine" that views Egypt "as pivotal in U.S. foreign policy because of the importance of oil in the region and Egypt's vital importance for stability in the Middle East and North Africa." He adds to this "the Egyptian Government's role in confronting Islamic fundamentalism." According to the study, "the collapse of the present regime will do more harm to American interests than the collapse of the Shah's regime in Iran." Husayn deduces that the "United States depends on Egypt to secure cheap oil, guarantee Israel's security, and strike at Islamic movements from Turkey to Algeria."

He adds that America "is using Egypt to carry out a siege against Sudan and Iran and uses the land of Sinai to organize a demonstration against the Palestinian Islamic movement." He adds that the summit is designed "to fight God, his messenger, and the faithful." He affirms, however, that "a nation that knew the road to booby-trapped bodies will not be deterred by all the devils of the earth; it will crush all the powers of evil." He also says that what happened in Jerusalem, Ashqelon, and Tel Aviv is "just a taste of what you will see in the future."

Finally, he urges the mujahidin of Hamas and Jihad to fight the Israelis and says that God will guide them to victory.

MB GUIDE EXAMINES STATE OF MUSLIMS, PROSPECTS

In a 2,000-word article on page 5, General Guide of the Muslim Brotherhood [MB] Mustafa Mashhur views the state of Muslims and their prospects. He opens his article with remarks from Dr. Mustafa Mahmud, in which he warned the Egyptians against "the secularist front" that will try to remove religion from the road as an obstacle to progress. In his article, Dr. Mahmud expects the West, the United States, and Israel to aid the secularists with funds and schemes and states that "only a true Islamic awakening and a young Islamic spirit" will protect the Islamic nation.

Examining the state of Muslims nowadays, Mashhur sees "a heated war by the enemies of Islam against Islam and Muslims in many places." A war in which "Muslims are weak and divided and the enemies are strong and coordinated."

He stresses that Muslims "should watch out for what is being hatched against them and follow the course of the prophet... and continue to preach the way of God wisely and through good counseling until God honors His promise of victory to the faithful against the enemies."

Mashhur states that "it is impermissible for Muslims today to despair or be discouraged when they find the

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enemies of Islam, with all their material power and modern weapons, coordinating their positions at a time when the Muslim nation is weak, divided, defeated and, sometimes, fights among itself as a result of the sedition sowed by the enemy."

He urges all Muslims "to protect their creed" and continue to preach Islam. He notes that the right approach begins by "changing ourselves" to become true Muslims to deserve victory. He adds that "Muslims must unite, bury their differences, and live like one nation and one body."

Relating how the "Zionist being was established by Zionist gangs" who displaced and killed Palestinians and usurped the land, he says that the Palestinians who are resisting the usurpation of their land are now seen as "extremist terrorists who should be fought... while the usurper is viewed as the defender of a right who should be aided."

He appeals to those "in charge of the world political leadership not to apply double standards."

Addressing the conferees at the Sharm al-Shaykh summit, he says that peace should be based on justice in order to last because "peace in which one party oppresses the other is no peace but an imposition of capitulation on the oppressed party."

Enumerating the forms of Zionist "oppression" and "injustice," he asks the conferees how they can expect a firm and lasting peace in the region. He adds that no peace can be achieved so long as one party, the Palestinians, is subjected to oppression and injustice.

He advises the conferees "not to antagonize all Muslim people" by backing the Zionist enemy. He adds that the Islamic states taking part in the summit "should not relinquish the land of Palestine, the land of Muslims."

As for world terrorism, he says that it needs a profound examination to find the underlying causes and the cure. He believes that the cure can be found in "rescuing freedoms and abrogating the laws that restrict them and involving the people in the decisionmaking through free elections, efforts to resolve the economic problems, and guiding the youth with virtuous religious values."

MUSLIM BROTHERS DENOUNCE PAKISTANI MINISTER'S ACCUSATIONS

An unattributed 250-word report on page 8 cites a statement in which the Muslim Brothers "denounce the untrue accusations the Pakistani interior minister made against them." The statement denies the minister's remark that "all Islamic movements all over the world came from under the cloak of the MB." Signed by "official spokesman Kamal al-Hilbawi, the statement says that the minister was looking for a scapegoat...to justify his failure to apprehend and control the real terrorists."

REPORT EXAMINES 'MOST IMPORTANT' IRANIAN ELECTIONS

Qutb al-'Arabi's 2,000-word report on page 4 examines "the most important elections in Tehran since the revolution." He notes that their importance lies in the fact that the elections were held amid strong changes and challenges at the domestic level, represented in the economic, cultural, and development problems, as well as at the foreign level with "attempts to impose the American-Zionist hegemony on Iran because of its principled position on international issues."

Al-'Arabi registers his observations on the elections. They refers to: the high turnout, the involvement of the revolutionary generation, the high turnout of women, the existence of many polling stations, the large number of candidates, the narrowing gap between the competing candidates, the world media interest in the elections, the neutral position the authorities and the media assumed from all candidates, and the absence of any form of rigging.

PRESS SYNDICATE DEMANDS ABROGATION OF LAW AMENDMENTS

A 5,000-word report by 'Abd-al-Hayy Muhammad and Khalid Yunus on page 3 gives an account of an "emergency general assembly session of the Press Syndicate" to discuss the new press law.

According to the report, the general assembly made its approval of the new press law "contingent on the introduction of essential amendments" that abrogate law no. 93 and press authority law no. 148, and cancel all the cases being considered according to these two laws. The general assembly also called for "calling off all the punishments that restrict the freedom of the press and journalists" and stressed that "no journalist will be arrested or his office or home searched in connection with a publication crime unless a member of the public prosecution is present."

The assembly made a number of recommendations reiterating the syndicate's absolute responsibility for punishing its members who break its rules as well as its "sole responsibility" for drawing up the journalists code of honor. It also stressed that it is "impermissible to obstruct or close a newspaper."

The report then gives an account of remarks made by Ibrahim Nafi', the Press Syndicate chairman, and other syndicate members on the draft press law.

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COLUMNIST SEES PRESS BILL AS SIGN OF BACKWARDNESS

Muhammad 'Abd-al-Quddus' 500-word "The Natives" column views the draft press law. He stresses that a "free press can never coexist with emergency laws, prisons filled with political prisoners, or a president who enjoys almost absolute powers." Hence, he deduces that the draft press law might be a step forward under autocracy, but it is "extremely backward when judged by the norms governing the free press in our contemporary world."

To illustrate his views, he says that what happened at President Mubarak's meeting with the professors and students of al-Zaqaziq University "was a living example of the backwardness in which we live.... It is as though we have turned back 30 years to the days of the one party regime."

Referring to the slogans the students shouted and their applause, he says that "the catastrophe lies in the fact that officials believe that those students represent Egypt."

He asks the reader if he expects a free press to thrive under a regime that "denies the youth of Egypt a live, open dialogue and prefers to it gatherings of allegiance, support, applause, and dancing, if possible."

He mocks the "national press headlines on the historic meeting between the leader and his son students."

'Abd-al-Quddus points out that he is talking about an entire regime that "needs basic change... a regime that knows that the world has changed...."

In the end, he states that the "freedom of the press is part of the freedom of society; it reflects the existing freedoms." Just as the sun and the moon can never exist at the same time, a free press cannot exist with despotism, or with the regime of "we sacrifice blood and soul for you" he concludes.

PARTY MEMBERS HARASSED FOR RESISTING PUBLIC SECTOR SALE

An unattributed 200-word report on page 8 says that the security agencies are "harassing" the Labor Party members. The report notes that the party's "worker's panel" organized a roundtable discussion on the sale of the public sector on 2 March. The meeting appealed to all workers to "unite with all political parties and powers and all the honest people in standing against the sale of the public sector and to set up a national democratic front to defend the public sector."

Political Islam Review: 'AQIDATI 12 Mar

NC1503212196

[FBIS Report] The following is a comprehensive review of all items in the 12 March edition of the Arabic language newspaper 'AQIDATI that pertain to political Islamic issues.

CONTENTS:

1. Front Page Photo Caption Criticizes Jewish 'Extremists'
2. Writer Defends Summit of Peacemakers
3. Editorial Blames Violence on Israel's 'Arbitrary' Measures
4. Clerics, Academics React to Sharm al-Shaykh Conference

FRONT PAGE PHOTO CAPTION CRITICIZES JEWISH 'EXTREMISTS'

A two-column photo on page 1 shows Orthodox Israeli Jews standing behind a police barrier, apparently in a state of agitation. The bottom part of a poster appears in the left hand corner of the photo. The poster is carried by an Orthodox Jewish man.

The caption below the photo has the following headline in red: "How Many Baruch Goldsteins Are Among These People ?!!"

The rest of the caption reads: "The funerals of the victims of the recent bombings in Israel have turned into angry demonstrations urging vengeance against the Muslims. Jewish extremists are controlling everything in Israel, with their traditional dress, black hats, and loud slogans calling for the killing of every Arab and Muslim to avenge the victims of the recent bombings. They forget their terrorist crimes to which thousands of Muslims fell victim. The urgent question is: How many Baruch Goldsteins, like the perpetrator of the al-Ibrahimi Mosque massacre, are among these people ?!!!!"

WRITER DEFENDS SUMMIT OF PEACEMAKERS

The newspaper's chairman of the board of directors, Samir Rajab, praises the Sharm al-Shaykh summit of peacemakers in his 350-word "Truthfully I Say" column on page 1.

Writing one day before the conference, he says that all divine religions call for peace and coexistence and that Muslims, Christians, and Jews welcome Egypt's proposal to hold a conference to save the Middle East peace process because they believe that "war solves nothing."

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Referring to the critics of the conference, he writes: "Those who utter falsehoods, pretend they are speaking God's words, and shoot arrows against the international conference before seeing its results are far from Islam."

He adds: "Their punishment will be great in this world and in the hereafter. Suffice it to say that their crimes include incitement to commit bloodshed, theft, and the violation of sanctities."

EDITORIAL BLAMES VIOLENCE ON ISRAEL'S 'ARBITRARY' MEASURES

A 600-word 'AQIDATI editorial on page 3 praises "peace pioneer" Husni Mubarak and the "peacemakers" who responded to his invitation to attend the Sharm al-Shaykh conference. It notes that this is an era when nations seek peace because any wars that erupt will be very destructive. Written before the conference, the article reminds conferees: "If the recent suicide operations in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, and Ashqelon are the major reason for holding this conference, let the leaders attending the meeting remember that these incidents were only reactions to arbitrary Israeli measures against the Palestinians, who consequently feel that the entire peace process is futile."

CLERICS, ACADEMICS REACT TO SHARM AL-SHAYKH CONFERENCE

Spread across pages 8 and 9 is a 4,500-word report by Muhammad al-'Abnudi and Tariq 'Abdallah. Published on the eve of the Sharm al-Shaykh summit it presents the views of Muslim and Christian clerics, academics, and members of the public on the issues of "terrorism, extremism, and peace on the Israeli-Palestinian scene and in the world at large."

Some of those interviewed are supportive of the Egyptian Government's attitude and the peacemakers conference but others are critical.

Egyptian mufti Muhammad Sayyid Tantawi says: "We strongly and sincerely support President Mubarak's courageous and honorable call to safeguard peace and combat the terrorism that kills innocents and spreads corruption on earth."

Dr. 'Abd-al-Sabur Marzuq, deputy chairman of the Higher Council of Islamic Affairs, says he supports "every step and initiative that seeks to attain regional peace" but criticizes Israel because it "prevaricates, procrastinates, and does not show real peace intentions."

He continues: "When Israel acted evasively in its dealings with the other peace parties, namely, Syria, and refused to evacuate the Golan Heights, no one showed interest, at least not as much interest as is now being shown in what some members of Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] did."

Egypt's Coptic Church prelate, Pope Shanudah III, remarks:

"Egypt and the Arabs have made numerous sacrifices for regional and world peace. Granted that Israel has been subjected to some operations in which it lost some victims, it must still try to spare its own people's blood and help to establish peace in the region and stop the terrorist attacks to which it and other countries are subjected."

Dr. Ahmad Shalabi, professor of history and civilization at Cairo University, declares that "existing international charters state that the defense of homelands is not terrorism" and adds that "what the Palestinians did was a reaction to the oppression and persecution carried out by Israel, because in the past few weeks it killed three Resistance leaders in Palestine."

He asks: "How can we forget this and remember only what the Palestinians do and blow it out of proportion in the media?"

Shalabi says Israel must give up its nuclear weapons and promptly restore all rights to their rightful owners.

The report continues: "Concerning Jewish fanaticism and terrorism, Dr. Ahmad Shalabi remarks: We cannot forget what the Jews did to our POW's. They slaughtered them and used their organs as human spare parts. Is this not the peak of fanaticism and terrorism?"

Shaykh Mahmud al-Sa'id Tantawi, an Awqaf Ministry official, says that since the Palestinians now have a government and an elected ruler, they must let him try to reclaim their rights from Israel and should not carry out operations against Israel. At the same time he urges Israel "to offer more peace and stop announcing that Jerusalem is Israel's eternal capital, because this announcement provokes the Muslim public."

Several other people interviewed for this report declare that terrorism has become an international phenomenon and must be dealt with as such. They affirm their support for peace but are critical of Israel, saying it should halt its own violence against the Palestinians and stop trying to "swallow up Arab and Palestinian rights."

Tal'at Musallam, a former army general described in the report as "a strategic expert," says:

"There are dominant powers that will decide the direction the conference will take. They seek to resume the so-called peace process to use it as a winning card in upcoming elections. They also want to help Israel achieve its aims."

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Kamal 'Ali Yunus, a pediatrician, remarks:

"The conference is a good step through which we can demonstrate that terrorism is not linked with any particular religion although the Jews are the people who use terrorism most in the name of religion."

He adds: "I must not forget to say how cheap Muslim blood is in the eyes of the world. Thousands, nay, millions of Muslims died in well-known massacres but no one acted. We hope this attitude to the Muslim nations will change and that the West will stop trying to stick the terrorism charge only on Muslims and Islam."

Palestinian Affairs

Palestinian Affairs: Hamas Spokesman—Attacks To Start Again if Talks Resume

TA1903053696 (Internet) SHOMRON NEWS SERVICE in English 18 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Hamas has begun broadcasting on their new radio station in Jordan. The station can be heard locally at frequency 1026 AM. In today's maiden broadcast, the Hamas Spokesman in Jordan, Ibrahim Ghawshah, threatened that the attacks against Israel would resume if the Israeli-Palestinian talks resume.

Palestinian Affairs: 'No. 3' Hamas Man on Wanted List Captured

TA1803185096 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1700 GMT 18 Mar 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Palestinian security services in the Gaza Strip have arrested another Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] member from the list of fugitives Israel presented. Our Arab affairs correspondent Ehud Ya'ari reports that the man is Muhammad Sanwar, who was third on the most-wanted list. The first two, Muhammad Dayf and Hasan Salamah, are still at large.

Palestinian Affairs: PA Arrests 36 Abu-Nidal Members, Seizes Explosives

TA1803155596 Jerusalem AL-QUDS in Arabic 18 Mar 96 p 5

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Khan Yunus — Colonel Tawfiq Jabr, head of the General Intelligence Service [GIS] in the southern province, Gaza District, has stated that 36 members of the Abu-Nidal [Sabri al-Banna] group have been arrested in Gaza District and that their hideouts were destroyed. Col. Jabr added that these individuals were organized abroad and in the territories and that they were planning to create disturbances in the Palestinian Authority [PA] areas, especially during the elections. They also intended to carry out political assassinations, especially against key PA figures.

Col. Jabr said that the arrest of these groups came following intensive security efforts by the GIS. He confirmed that they possessed weapons and explosives. [passage omitted]

Palestinian Affairs: Mines, Explosives Seized; Hamas Accused of Preparing Bombs

JN1803222196 Gaza Palestinian Broadcasting Corporation Television Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 18 Mar 96

[Announcer-read report over video]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Palestinian security forces have seized a quantity of explosives and mines in a residential area in Gaza City. Bomb experts have disposed of, and defused, this quantity of explosives.

[Begin recording] [Unidentified correspondent, in progress] ... the explosives in a residential area in Gaza. These explosives were about to claim the lives of thousands of citizens. Can you give us details about this?

[Unidentified official] These explosives were ready for detonation. When they were found they were equipped with a very sensitive and precise electronic, instantaneous, detonation system. Thus, the moment one reaches a target or when he wants to detonate the explosives, he simply has to activate the device.

These explosives were prepared by engineers expert in preparing explosives and similar devices. The quantities are very large. Each mine weighs approximately 7.4 kg; so, these six old Czech (Mendal) mines weigh approximately 44 kg. This type of mine is now used in most bombings.

These explosives were found ready for detonation. Praise be to God, they were defused, and the detonators, batteries, and charges were separated from each other without any casualties among the youths.

[Correspondent] Do you believe that there are certain parties behind these explosives and ...

[Official, interrupting] Of course, Hamas [the Islamic Resistance Movement] is the party that prepared these explosives.

[Correspondent] When exactly were these explosives, which were ready for detonation, seized?

[Official] On the night of 15 March.

[Correspondent] Do you wish to say anything to citizens about this?

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[Official] We want to give some very important advice to all our kinsfolk in the Gaza Strip or in the West Bank. Once they suspect anyone trying to bury or store materials of this type they should notify the nearest National Authority center in order to save our people from these tools of destruction. We are trying by all means to remove these tools. I advise the people to notify the nearest authority or any circle concerned with this issue.

[Correspondent] Thank you and goodbye.

[Official] You are welcome. [end recording]

Palestinian Affairs: Man Planning Suicide Attack Interviewed

JN1903121796 Gaza Palestinian Broadcasting Corporation Television Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 18 Mar 96

[Interview with Islamic Jihad member Rashid Mahmud Ibrahim Saqr by unidentified correspondent; place and date not given—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Correspondent] Tell us your name, when you were born, and your place of residence.

[Saqr] I am Rashid Mahmud Ibrahim Saqr, from al-Daraj in Gaza City. I am 22 years old and am a member of the Islamic Jihad Movement. I was arrested last Saturday, 9 March, on a charge of training to carry out a suicide operation at a bus stop in a Tel Aviv street.

[Correspondent] When did you join the Islamic Jihad Movement?

[Saqr] In 1992.

[Correspondent] How did they train or teach you, and reach an agreement with you to blow yourself up?

[Saqr] I reached an agreement with a person to carry out the operation. He told me that there would be $6,000 for blowing myself up at a Tel Aviv bus stop.

[Correspondent] They spoke to you of money only, or did they speak of other topics?

[Saqr] They did not speak to me of any other topic. They told me that martyrdom will serve my parents, that I will marry 72 maidens [houris] in heaven, and that I will serve my friends in heaven. They told me that there are grades of martyrdom, and that I should become a martyr in order to go to heaven. They told me that I would be able to put in a good word for my parents, relatives, and friends there.

[Correspondent] Was a date or day set for you to carry out the suicide operation?

[Saqr] The operation was set for 13 March, that is last Wednesday.

[Correspondent] That is the day of the [Sharm al-Shaykh] conference?

[Saqr] Yes, the day of the international conference against terrorism.

[Correspondent] How were you arrested?

[Saqr] They arrested me on Saturday, 9 March. They told me that I was charged with training to carry out explosions. They also told me that I was planning to carry out an operation at a Tel Aviv bus stop in exchange for $6,000. I was in a difficult economic situation. This encouraged me to agree to carry out this operation.

[Correspondent] Rashid, do you not feel remorse?

[Saqr] Yes, I feel remorse now. I thank the Palestinian National Authority for arresting me before I was able to carry out the operation.

[Correspondent] What do you have to say to the Palestinian youth?

[Saqr] I tell them to think twice before doing anything. They must think whether what they will do will make them martyrs or not? Will God accept such an action as martyrdom? He [Prophet Muhammad], God's peace and blessings be upon him, said: Those who throw themselves from over a mountain, killing themselves, will go to hell.

[Correspondent] Then this is what you want to tell the Palestinian youth, that you learned a very important lesson and realized from experience that anyone who kills a person kills [word instinct].

[Saqr] Yes, because God said that we should not kill ourselves, as he provides us with sustenance.

[Correspondent] If you encounter the person who asked you to commit suicide, what would you tell him?

[Saqr] I would tell him: Fear God and think twice that one day you will face God's judgment and that the person you incited to commit suicide will come and tell you: You have destroyed me. Why did you send me to my death while I am innocent? God, I seek justice from you.

[Correspondent] What do you have to say to your parents after emerging from this tribulation?

[Saqr] I ask them to forgive me. May God guide our steps to what is good, keep us away from evil, and have us return to him with pure hearts to open a new page with God the almighty.

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Palestinian Affairs: Hamas—Zionists Would Pay Heavy Price for Expulsions

MM1803163196 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 18 Mar 96 p 7

[Unattributed report: "Hamas Hints at Price for Expulsion Policy"]

[FBIS Translated Text] London, AL-HAYAH — The Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) has stressed that it is "seriously viewing current reports" concerning the Israel Government's plan to expel scores of Palestinians on the pretext that they had direct links with the perpetrators of the suicide operations in Israel.

The movement said in a statement, of which AL-HAYAH obtained a copy yesterday, that "since the conclusion of the Sharm al-Shaykh summit the Zionist occupation authorities have been continuing to prepare the atmosphere for reopening the expulsion file, which was closed by the Palestinian people's heroes in the Marj al-Zuhur camp in southern Lebanon a few years ago."

The statement said that "the movement, together with all the forces which have vowed to defend the Palestinian people's rights, which have been abandoned by those claiming to be speaking in the people's name, stresses to the world that the expulsion of any Palestinian from his homeland would be a new Zionist crime which we would not let pass easily, and the Zionists would pay a heavy price."

He added: "While the Zionists continue to commit their crimes against our people's sons and announce their plans to expel scores from the homeland, the Self-Rule Authority is busy pursuing the sincere sons of our people and attacking society's institutions. The Authority should focus on working to secure job opportunities for workers, instead of leaving them at the mercy of the Zionist occupier and his military cordons. It should also focus on protecting the people's sons, instead of pursuing them on the pretext of protecting agreements which have proved a failure and with whose clauses the enemy has not complied."

Hamas urged the Palestinian National Authority "to firmly and strongly confront any expulsion attempt in order to unite the Palestinian people, whose unity is threatened as a result of the Authority's practices and policy."

Hamas called on the Arab states, in particular Lebanon, "not to receive any Palestinians expelled by the occupation authorities." It called on the OAU "to oblige its member states not to submit to the Zionists' temptations to receive the expellees.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Classified' Document on Meeting of Fundamentalist Groups

TA1803185596 Gaza AL-HAYAH AL-JADIDAH in Arabic 15 Mar 96 pp 1, 15

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman, AL-HAYAH AL-JADIDAH — AL-HAYAH AL-JADIDAH has obtained a classified document containing details of an important meeting held recently in the Iranian city of Qom. Leaders of 10 Islamic fundamentalist organizations, the leader of the Iranian revolution, and a number of Iranian officials participated in the meeting.

The meeting was held amid a veil of secrecy, but the document reveals that the venue of the meeting was the headquarters of the Council of Iranian Clergy in Qom, spiritual capital of the Iranian revolution. From the Iranian side, the meeting was attended by 'Ali Khamene'i, spiritual guide of the Islamic revolution, Imam Mehdi Karrubi, Shaykh 'Ali Mohtashemi, and Shaykh 'Ali Mohsendust. From the fundamentalist movements and organizations, the meeting was attended by leaders and senior officials representing 10 Arab fundamentalist movements. These were: Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] of Palestine, Islamic Jihad Movement of Palestine, Islamic Salvation Front of Algeria, Islamic Movement for the Liberation of Bahrain, the Sudanese Islamic Front, Hizballah of Lebanon, the Imam Morteza Association of Syria, Islamic Jihad of Egypt, the Islamic Movement for Change of Libya, and the Social Reform Association of Kuwait.

The document stated that "the participants reviewed the Islamic situation in the Arab region in general and the assault against Iran, led by the United States." The document stressed that the meeting was political and did not deal with military and security affairs. The participants limited themselves to discussing political, ideological, and organizational details.

Neither the precise date of the meeting nor the reason for not announcing it is known, but observers who follow Iranian affairs said that the meeting was held recently in the wake of the operations by Hamas and Islamic Jihad in Palestine and following the confrontations in Bahrain.

In this context, reliable, informed sources disclosed that Iran advised Hizballah in Lebanon to maintain a low military profile, decrease all military activities, and refrain from adopting a hard-line stance with regard to the political situation in the region as a whole in a bid to forestall the U.S. offensive against Tehran.

The sources added that Iran has launched a widespread process to change its presence, in particular, in Lebanon.

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It has replaced the Iranian Revolutionary Guard members there with other officers who have not served in Lebanon. It has also sent to Lebanon a large military committee of about 50 officers from the Ministry of Security [name as published] and the Revolutionary Guard.

The task of this committee is twofold: first, reorganizing the military and security infrastructure of Hizballah, upgrading its performance in these two spheres, and equipping Hizballah with all the necessary equipment before Hizballah is disengaged from the Revolutionary Guard.

Second, supervising the transfer of some training camps belonging to the Revolutionary Guard from Lebanon. The camps were used for training members of various fundamentalist organizations. These camps are expected to be transferred to another Arab country, Somalia.

The sources said that the decision to transfer some camps and training bases was adopted following Iranian-Syrian talks during which Damascus demanded that these bases be moved out of Lebanon because their presence was embarrassing Syria immensely, especially since the bases concerned are located in areas of the al-Biqa' Valley where Syrian forces are stationed.

The sources added that despite the decision to transfer these bases to another country, most of the political and organizational centers of opposition Islamic movements will remain in Lebanon.

The absence of the Iraqi Islamic opposition from the Qom conference was conspicuous, and the reasons for the absence of the opposition Iraqi Al-Da'wah Party from this meeting, in which all fundamentalist movements in the Arab homeland participated, are not clear.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Claims Hamas, Israeli Extremists Linked

AU1803144796 Hamburg DER SPIEGEL in German 18 Mar 96 pp 157-161

[Interview with Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat by Volkhard Windfuhr in Gaza; date not given: "The Key to Happiness"]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Windfuhr] Mr. President, 29 heads of state and government, as well as high-ranking politicians from all over the world gave their support to the Middle East peacemakers at the anti-terrorism summit in Sharm al-Shaykh. Has this demonstration helped you and Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres?

['Arafat] I can only say that terrorists on both sides are trying to destroy the peace process.

[Windfuhr] At the moment, violence clearly comes from the Palestinian Hamas, not from the Israeli zealots.

['Arafat] The terrorists' links are very far-reaching. I can prove that Israeli and Palestinian extremists have been making common cause to finish off the peace process.

[Windfuhr] Could you please enlarge on that?

['Arafat] Avishai Raviv, the leader of the Israeli underground organization Ejal, from which Rabin's murderer comes, has confessed openly that he had five meetings with the leaders of Hamas and Islamic Jihad in the Gaza Strip — near the Filastin hotel. He also admitted that the two sides have been in contact via a liaison officer and have discussed joint operations.

[Windfuhr] Do the Israeli security authorities have the same information?

['Arafat] Our information is based on seized material. We, for instance, arrested a certain Muhamed Abu Warda near Hebron, one of the men who was accused of being responsible for the bomb attacks in Jerusalem. He made a confession before the Palestinian state security court, declaring: "It is our aim to bring down the Peres government and bring a Likud government to power." This should stop the peace process.

[Windfuhr] Have you made these statements available to the Israelis?

['Arafat] I am not making this up, we have documents in hand. You can be assured that we will disclose everything when the time is right, including the recently seized internal announcements by Hamas which prove that the organization has had contacts like the ones I have already described. We have a wealth of evidence that confirms the close cooperation of terrorists on both sides.

[Windfuhr] Can you give us another specific example?

['Arafat] Let us take the first terrorist attack in Jerusalem and the attack in Aschelon: The first one who announced the names of the perpetrators and their origin, only 50 minutes after the attack, was Rechawam Seewi, the chief of the radical Jewish "Moledet" organization, which openly demands that the Palestinians should be driven from their occupied home of Palestine.

[Windfuhr] Perhaps he got his information from the Israeli security authorities.

['Arafat] No, the Israeli Government did not inform us until noon, and they said that the suicide bomber came from Gaza. But we noticed that the young man who had allegedly committed the attack was still in Gaza and full of life. Only 48 hours later, the Israeli

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authorities gave us the names of two suspects who had come from Hebron and were said to have been involved in the attack. Do I not have a right to ask why it should take the Israeli Government 48 hours to find out what Rechawam Seewi seems to have known after only 50 minutes?

[Windfuhr] What do you conclude from that?

['Arafat] My view is that either he knew about the attack beforehand and kept his information secret, or he was involved in the planning.

[Windfuhr] Do the Israelis believe you? And why then are they not taking any action?

['Arafat] Evidence is growing stronger, there is no doubt about that. We have arrested a number of suspects and discovered highly sensitive explosives that were to be brought into Gaza via the village of Dihnija.

[Windfuhr] The Israelis and the Americans are pressuring you to adopt even tougher measures...

['Arafat] ... I won't accept the term pressure. Certain right-wing extremist circles in Israel, but by no means the persons who operate on the international level, are trying to blame the Palestinian autonomy government and its President Yasir 'Arafat for everything. We are fulfilling our task since we are against terrorist acts and violence. At a meeting in Amman I warned against the Ejal organization — in the presence of King Husayn of Jordan, U.S. Secretary of State Christopher, and others.

[Windfuhr] Will you adopt even more severe measures now?

['Arafat] I will do everything I can. But one thing must be clear: We do not have a magic stick. They should know that these organizations use their infiltration measures on various levels. Before he was murdered, Rabin admitted what Minister Jossi Beilin also confirmed recently — that Israel established some of these organizations itself years ago in order to compete with the PLO.

[Windfuhr] Why do you not simply ban Hamas?

['Arafat] I do not accuse all members of Hamas in general; but, unfortunately, there are certain elements that undermine, infiltrate, and hatch plots.

[Windfuhr] Do you fear that the confrontation between your security forces and the Islamists could turn into a Palestinian civil war?

['Arafat] In our capacity as a national Palestinian authority we have made it clear that an armed force stands at the beginning of a state. The state must not let the monopoly of force be taken away from it.

[Windfuhr] Hamas claims that its fighters also serve the national cause.

['Arafat] Only the state may maintain an armed force. But at the same time we respect and promote the principle of political pluralism. The elections that we held recently have proved that. But we will not accept a state within a state. I say yes to dialogue, but no to a dialogue of guns. Our laws apply to everyone.

[Windfuhr] How strong are the extremist Islamic groups that are against peace?

['Arafat] The extremist groups are small and fragmented, but they are conspiring with one another — and this includes conspiracies between Israeli and Palestinian groups. But their influence should not be overestimated. The Palestinian parliamentary elections have shown that the overwhelming majority of our people ignore the boycott appeal that was spread by the 10 radical organizations based in Damascus. Turnout was higher than it is in Israel or the United States, and the outcome was clear — a clear mandate for continuing the peace of the courageous.

[Windfuhr] Are foreign forces behind the groups that want to boycott peace at all costs?

['Arafat] Yes, both sides get support from abroad. Just look at Avishai Raviv: He fled to the United States. How could he manage to escape to Brooklyn? Where do these people get their money from?

[Windfuhr] From supporters in the United States?

['Arafat] It works like this: Extremist organizations in Palestine get their money from Iran and from Arab countries, also from several Gulf states. That is why I was the first one to demand an international conference in support of the peace process. It is not just regional, but also international forces that are closely connected with terrorism. I am grateful to Presidents Clinton and Mubarak for convening this summit so quickly.

[Windfuhr] The conference was certainly an impressive demonstration of solidarity, but still the peace process has come to a halt for the time being.

['Arafat] That is a very dangerous development. The Israeli Government has closed our border crossings; we cannot even use the border point with Egypt near Rafa. Israel has even banned fishing boats from leaving the ports, and they hardly allow anything through to us — whether it is rice, sugar, or flour, not even from Egypt. Do they want us to starve?

[Windfuhr] They want to prevent further suicide commands from getting in.

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['Arafat] The closing off is a grave violation of our agreements and shows that there are forces in Israel that resist the peace process and want to turn back developments to point zero. That is another reason why the international summit in Sharm al-Shaykh is so important; it was by no means only a demonstration against the enemies of peace in the Arab camp.

[Windfuhr] Is it conceivable that the Israelis could reoccupy the Gaza Strip?

['Arafat] The Israelis are here already, they just sent more reinforcement to their settlers.

[Windfuhr] What if in the process of hunting down terrorists, the Israeli Army gets the town of Gaza under its control again?

['Arafat] That is exactly what several Israeli generals demand; it would be a dangerous violation of the agreements that we have concluded.

[Windfuhr] How would you react to that?

['Arafat] The answer would have to come from the entire world, because the agreement with Israel is not just a Palestinian-Israeli affair, but an agreement that has many patrons all over the world.

[Windfuhr] Where are things going to go? What do you expect Israel to do after these attacks?

['Arafat] After the bloodbath that Jewish gunman Baruch Goldstein committed in Hebron, we Palestinians did not bring the peace process to a halt despite the great number of casualties and the great pain. That is why I advise the Israelis not to allow the Palestinian and Israeli plotters to reach their goal.

[Windfuhr] When will the peace talks be resumed?

['Arafat] According to the agreements that we have concluded, the talks on the final status of the occupied territories should start as soon as possible, but no later than the beginning of May.

[Windfuhr] Should these include the delicate issue of Jerusalem, irrespective of the tense situation?

['Arafat] The Mideast peace conference in Madrid was based on UN resolutions 242 and 338, according to the principle of land in return for peace. El Quds, Arab Jerusalem, is among the territories that Israel occupied in 1967. We should respect the agreements and continue to work for peace.

[Windfuhr] Do you really believe that the Palestinian flag will fly above East Jerusalem one day despite the terrorist attacks?

['Arafat] By all means, and I hope it will do so very soon. Patience is the key to happiness.

[Windfuhr] Mr. President, thank you for the interview.

Palestinian Affairs: Security Chief Outlines PA Stance on Terrorism

BR1803130496 Milan PANORAMA in Italian 21 Mar 96 pp 92-93

[Report on interview with Nasr Yusuf, Palestinian Authority's chief of police in Gaza, by Simonetta Della Seta in Gaza; date not given: "Whose Side Are the People of Gaza on?"]

[FBIS Translated Text] I went to Jericho to meet with Jibril al-Rajub chief of preventative security of it the Palestinian Authority [PA], the outspoken chief of the Palestinian intelligence services. After answering a few questions, al-Rajub, already nervous, was called away to very urgent meeting. It is said that 'Arafat himself dismissed him from his post. It is also said that the president punished him for having "yielded" too much to Hamas and for having failed to obey certain orders. He denied it all and explained that he still retains his post and still occupies the same office. But he would take no more questions. Instead we received some answers from Nasr Yusuf, head of all the Palestinian security forces, and very highly trusted by the president. His office is in Gaza, near 'Arafat's. "What happened with al-Rajub is an internal matter. I do not think there will be any official notification of the what happened", he told PANORAMA.

[Della Seta] And what about 'Arafat's demand for a much tougher stance toward Hamas?

[Yusuf] We are implementing it. There is a plan. We are striking at the heart of these groups.

[Della Seta] Israel, too, is seeking increasingly close cooperation.

[Yusuf] The cooperation process exists and is strong on both sides, Palestinian and Israeli. After what has happened, that is, since the attacks, it has actually improved. We need meetings, joint actions, and a joint analysis of the situation. [Yusuf ends]

Certainly, the Palestinians have arrested 600 people But the real problem is the support of the population. Yusuf admitted that people have contrasting feelings: "On the one hand we are supported, because it is understood that terrorism curbs the peace process, but at the same time we perceive bitterness over the collective punishment that Israel inflicted by closing off all the Palestinian territories."

[Della Seta] There remains the problem of cooperation with the Israelis in searching for the terrorists.

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[Yusuf] It is necessary to act autonomously, albeit within the necessary cooperation between the two security apparatuses. It must be remembered, however, that our hands are still too tied. It is necessary — vital, in fact — in the present situation for our secret services to be strengthened.

Palestinian Affairs: Palestinian Official on Hamas, Israeli Moves

NC1803191396 Cairo AL-MUSAWWAR in Arabic 15 Mar 96 pp 16-17, 86

[Interview with Fatah Central Committee member Hani al-Hasan by Salwa Abu-Sa'dah; place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Abu-Sa'dah] How do you see the tense situation between Israel and the Palestinian Authority [PA] after the Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] operations?

[Al-Hasan] The basic problem now is Israel's interpretation of the Oslo agreement; namely, that Israel's security has precedence over a political solution and over Palestinian interests. This notion dominates the mind of the Israelis whenever they try to solve any problem. As concerns control over land, the West Bank and Gaza are divided into three areas. Area A is under full Palestinian security control. This applies only to seven percent of the land. Area B is under joint Palestinian-Israeli control, and it constitutes only 25 percent of the land. The rest of the land, which amounts to about 70 percent, is under full Israeli responsibility. This situation means there are many security responsibilities on the ground. The political stands of the various Palestinian groups interfere with these security issues. For example, the daily confiscation of land [by the Israelis] causes great popular resentment, such is the case in Hebron. This resentment expresses itself in various ways. And this is not confined to the Palestinians alone. For example, an Israeli, believing that Area A must not exist — that is, land must not be returned to the Palestinians — killed Yitzhaq Rabin. We also find that a group of Palestinians expresses its resentment in a different way, such as the method used by Hamas.

[Abu-Sa'dah] Will the measures taken by Israel end Palestinian extremism?

[Al-Hasan] I personally do not think so. The Israelis are now engaged in reaction; they are not taking measures that they really believe will solve the problem. This is an offensive on all fronts; by it, the Israelis believe they will crush Hamas and its infrastructure.

[Abu-Sa'dah] What about the package of measures the Peres government adopted, such as establishing a war committee or the idea of forming a small cabinet?

[Al-Hasan] I do not think these measures will solve the problem. The right thing to do is to find a political solution; namely, hand over all security responsibilities on the ground to the PA. Then, things can be brought under control. The evidence is the situation in Gaza, where there is no security problem.

[Abu-Sa'dah] But all statements by Israeli officials, including Shim'on Peres, accuse 'Arafat of being unable to control things.

[Al-Hasan] This is the logic of impotence and failure to interpret things correctly. A politician makes a grave mistake when he resorts to justifications and escapes interpretations. As long as there are Areas A, B, and C, how can security be maintained, especially given that the West Bank is a very small region?

The current situation for the Palestinian security official is strange. For example, he is in charge of a 5-km strip of land, after which he enters an area under joint responsibility, and then, two kilometers away, he has nothing to do with security. How can this be?

So those who are attacking the PA are evading a correct diagnosis of the situation. The suicide bombers did not start from Area A, where the PA has full responsibility; they set out from areas under full Israeli control.

[Abu-Sa'dah] How do you view statements by some PA officials that the recent operations were carried out not by 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam Battalions, but by others?

[Al-Hasan] Like any political or quasi-military movement, Hamas is influenced by the public mood. A trend in Hamas now believes that the movement must deal with the PA and try to form a political party to engage in political struggle. This trend is big and influential in Gaza, and it has many followers in the West Bank.

The other trend in Hamas believes that the struggle against Israel must continue. This trend does not believe in an interim solution. This trend is linked to foreign forces, whether through funding or through joint interests. It is the extremist wing in Hamas that is carrying out these operations.

[Abu-Sa'dah] How can the problem be solved then?

[Al-Hasan] The wing that wants to form a political party must not be dealt with in the same way as the wing that wants to continue armed struggle. Efforts must be made to stop any foreign contacts by the wing that adopts violence and extremism and to stop the financial support it receives from these foreign sides so that it does not

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turn into a tool to serve the interests and policies of others.

[Abu-Sa'dah] Do you support the view that Hamas now represents and serves the world Islamic trend and that it is no longer a nationalist Palestinian movement serving national causes?

[Al-Hasan] A party that rejects a transitional solution in effect rejects the Palestinian national framework and operates in a broader context. This is where the role of the extremist Palestinian forces that commit violations on the Palestinian side comes in.

[Abu-Sa'dah] Like what?

[Al-Hasan] For example, let us take Abu-Nidal [Sabri al-Banna-leader of Fatah-the Revolutionary Council]. It has been proven that Israel managed to carry out more than one operation in the past by using Abu-Nidal's apparatus.

[Abu-Sa'dah] What operations?

[Al-Hasan] The murder of martyrs Abu-Iyad and Abu-Nidal [name as published] in Tunis. Those who carried out the killings had connections with Abu-Nidal. After the arrest of the spy 'Adnan Yasin, who worked at the office of Hakam Bal'awi [former PLO representative in Tunis], 'Adnan Yasin's link with the killer was established. Abu-Iyad's killer was Yasin's maternal cousin.

This cell within Abu-Nidal's apparatus is controlled by the Israelis and it is the one that carried out the operations against Abu-Iyad and Abu-al-Hawl.

Therefore, I do not rule out the possibility that the extremists—I do not say the Israeli Government or the official agencies in Israel—will recruit and use forces when they deem it appropriate. We cannot say that these operations were carried out by Israeli extremists, because this is a big and complicated job in the current situation. We must not flatter ourselves or ignore the facts. Without a political solution first, security cannot be 100 percent.

[Abu-Sa'dah] Is it true that it was Jewish extremists who provided weapons and explosives to the al-Qassam Battalions and Yahya 'Ayyash's men, as was reported recently?

[Al-Hasan] All I know is that the leader of Eyal, the extremist Israeli organization, who was arrested and, to our surprise, left Israel for the United States, wrote an article in the newspaper OURASHALAIM. In that article he said he had met with representatives from the Islamic Jihad in Gaza and that there had been a discussion about mutual resources and interests.

[Abu-Sa'dah] But after the four latest incidents, [PA member] Jamil al-Tarifi said that there is an Israeli black market providing weapons for Palestinian extremists.

[Al-Hasan] At one stage, the right wing in the Israeli government began to allow arms markets on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. This was because they thought this might contribute to the outbreak of a Palestinian civil war and infighting and that this instability would continue in the absence of a unified authority on the ground.

[Abu-Sa'dah] What about Israel's rejection of the truce announced by Hamas' military wing?

[Al-Hasan] Personally I believe that any confrontation where you leave no opportunity for your enemy to back down or retreat can lead to greater ferocity. I belong to the school that feels there is no absolute security solution to this issue but that the solution should have both a security and political nature.

I believe that it is vital to strengthen the Hamas moderates who favor operating as a political party. This should accompany any other measures.

[Abu-Sa'dah] Will the latest incidents help the Likud to take power?

[Al-Hasan] The possibilities are now open. A coup has taken place in Israel in which the Army practically took over the authority in the name of security. We do not know what will happen next month. There are three possibilities:

Will Peres win the next elections? This possibility is weak now.

Will we be surprised by Shahal, Ehud Baraq, or another figure from the Labor Party declaring his candidacy against Peres? In that case the Labor Party will stand a better chance in the elections. This is probable.

Will the Likud return to power? This is no longer as unlikely as it was two months ago.

The conflict between Sharon and Netanyahu is at its height as Sharon has begun to distance himself from Netanyahu and prepare a new Likud figure for power.

[Abu-Sa'dah] What do you think of the PA's action to destroy Hamas social infrastructure, the Islamic University campus in Gaza, and other establishments?

[Al-Hasan] Personally, I don't believe that the closure of the Islamic University in Gaza can contain extremism. The university can serve as a forum for dialogue with over 7,000 students. These youths are in their formative years and preventing them from attending classes and returning them home means leaving them

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prey to extremist influences after having placed them in a position that will make them without a future.

[Abu-Sa'dah] What about the other establishments?

[Al-Hasan] The same thing can be said of the other social establishments. The closure of any clinic or hospital will not please any Palestinian who benefit from them, particularly because the Israelis did not build a school or hospital throughout their 30 years of occupation. In Gaza, there is only one bed for every 1,000 sick. Our schools operate with three shifts a day and there are more than 60 students in each class. We must not lose our nerve and must not make security mistakes to serve the Israeli elections, because these mistakes will have a much worse effect after the elections.

[Abu-Sa'dah] Do you believe that the date of the elections is behind Peres' resorting to these rigorous measures for fear of one upmanship by the Israeli Right?

[Al-Hasan] We must draw a line between the elections and the regional situation. The recent measures taken by Israel mean that the Israeli army has taken over power. Real power in Israel now is in the hands of four generals. The Israeli army is trying to prove its effectiveness. Since the security agencies failed to learn the reality of Hamas' effective mechanisms, the army decided to attack on all directions using all forms of violence. Detention and sweeps are taking place in large areas. The army is trying to obtain information through interrogations. The onslaught is intended to impose domination and gather information. Had there been specific goals, the situation would not have warranted all these measures. The root cause of this situation is the absence of a political solution, the continued building of settlements, continued persecution of the population of Hebron, and the long history of conflict by Sharon and the like against the Palestinian people. This situation requires a solution. The solution lies in Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank. There is a need for a political solution that enables the Palestinians to assume full responsibility for security and then the situation can be put under control.

[Abu-Sa'dah] Why does Peres now link withdrawal from Hebron, which was supposed to take place on 28 March, to amendment to the Palestinian charter?

[Al-Hasan] We must admit that late in his life Rabin began to realize that what is inevitable is inevitable and, subsequently, withdrawal from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and the establishment of a Palestinian state are inevitable. Hence the rise in extremism by the Israeli right, which assassinated Rabin. A political civil war in Israel began among the various forces and was embodied in the assassination of Rabin. When Peres came, he took important steps on Rabin's path. The extremist forces in Israeli society saw that Peres is going too far like Rabin and so the issue of the settlements began to take a higher gear and the settlers' arrogance increased. For election reasons, this situation has not been confronted.

[Abu Sa'dah] What about the regional factor?

[Al-Hasan] The regional factor has some impact, because a solution to the Palestinian issue that does not consider the interests of the other countries is unacceptable. Iran does not agree that the crisis in the region can be solved, or that it may not be taken on unilaterally or liquidated. That is why there is always a counter reaction every time progress is made on the Palestinian track.

[Abu-Sa'dah] Is this the reason for the suspension of negotiations on the Palestinian side and on the Syrian-Israeli track?

[Al-Hasan] By declaring that he will not withdraw from Hebron unless the charter is amended, Peres is in fact yielding to the extremists' demands because the Palestinians have not said that they will not amend the charter. President 'Arafat said from the start that he personally agrees to the amendment of the charter. But this is the prerogative of the Palestine National Council [PNC]. To amend the charter, the quorum requires the attendance of two-thirds of the members. Two-thirds of the PNC members must vote to change the charter articles and not two-thirds of those attending. The Palestinian president is now working to implement his promise. Forestalling matters and linking withdrawal from Hebron to the amendment of the charter are proof that the Israeli Government is making concessions to Israeli extremism and also trying to serve electoral interests.

[Abu-Sa'dah] Moving to diplomatic efforts, what were the most important issues discussed at your meeting with Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa, particularly as you were a member of the Palestinian delegation led by Abu-'Ammar [Yasir 'Arafat] when he met President Mubarak?

[Al-Hasan] There are two schools of thought in the Palestinian arena. One school wants the Palestinians alone to resolve the Palestinian issue, relying only on themselves. It is this school that has now begun to understand the realities and realize that the security situation and stability are being threatened by the interference of parties that have regional interests in this area. The second school believes that we have to achieve the Palestinian interests within the context of achieving

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regional Arab interests, that is, the most Palestinian interests will be achieved through the emergence of an Arab order.

We are holding our talks with Egypt on the premise of our understanding of the importance of collective consultations for the sake of achieving the Arab order that will be formed through the process of drawing up the final solution in the region. These forces are Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Morocco.

The dialogue during President 'Arafat's recent visit to Egypt revolved around the need to take pragmatic steps to confront the current regional situation and avoid the collapse of the peace process. The two presidents also discussed the issue of the siege imposed on the Palestinians. Gaza was closed for a total of 240 days in 15 months and every day of closure means a loss of $6 million. The total losses are more than what the donor countries are giving us. There is also the question of the closure of economic borders between us and Egypt. Only 15 vehicles are allowed through a day. There is scope for a trade exchange of $1 billion a year if borders between Egypt and Gaza are opened.

Discussions also included political coordination, that is, how to draw up joint policies that will lead to a minimum level of Arab understanding.

[Abu-Sa'dah] Will the tripartite summit still be held?

[Al-Hasan] We are still waiting for it. It will be an important step forward. It is expected to be held after King Husayn's visit to Washington. I believe that its importance prompted King Husayn to hold talks with President Clinton about the region's affairs. We hope that the tripartite meeting will be a step toward another quadripartite meeting that includes Syria because the circle cannot be completed without Syria.

[Abu-Sa'dah] Will the question of a confederation between the Palestinians and Jordan be up for discussion in the coming stage?

[Al-Hasan] Confederation in its true meaning is a vital demand for the Palestinian and Jordanian sides. Unions [ittihadat] arise from need rather than from desire. The establishment of a confederation is necessary for both sides. This unity does in fact exist and is the strongest practical unity between the two countries. There is a need for this unity due to the interlocking interests and intertwinement of the past 50 years.

[Abu-Sa'dah] What about Israel?

[Al-Hasan] Israel does not want the correct type of confederation. The Likud does not want Palestinian sovereignty over the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, especially the West Bank. It wants to keep them under Israeli sovereignty or to discuss the question of sovereignty with Jordan so that the PA will remain an authority over the population only and not over the territory. The Likud wants to achieve a Jordanian-Israeli economic agreement where the Palestinians are turned into mere workers. This is rejected because the Palestinians are capable of building a strong economy. It is enough for you to know that Palestinian companies are among the 7 percent of successful companies in London and its suburbs.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Abbas 'Satisfied' With Summit, Vows To 'Root Out' Terror

TA1603114296 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0705 GMT 16 Mar 96

[Report on interview with Mahmud 'Abbas, head of the PLO Executive Committee, by Arab affairs correspondent Arye Gus; place and date not given; from the "Weekly Newsreel" program; italicized passages in English — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Gus] In a special interview to Qol Yisra'el, Abu-Mazin [Mahmud 'Abbas], the No. 2 man in the PLO, said he was satisfied with the results of the Sharm al-Shaykh summit. The question is whether to believe Abu-Mazin's words or his sigh.

['Abbas, sighing] *Yes, we are satisfied because all these big people, all these statesmen came here to condemn the terrorism and to support the peace process. This in itself is good as a sign for the whole world that these states are with us against the terrorism, against the terrorists, and with the peace process.*

[Gus] I reminded Abu-Mazin that not all the Palestinian demands at the summit had been met — for example, their demand to lift the closure and the restrictions on the Palestinians. Abu-Mazin replied that the summit participants chose to phrase their decisions differently, stressing the need to help the Palestinians with their economic problems. This is because the Israelis did not want any explicit mention of the closure. Everyone understands, however, that the closure and the siege must be eased because the results of the closure have a bad impact on our people and punish those who support the peace process rather than the perpetrators of terrorist attacks. When I told Abu-Mazin that even U.S. President Bill Clinton had not supported the Palestinian position, he replied that although Clinton had not agreed with the Palestinians, the closure nevertheless constitutes collective punishment because closing the borders to people denies them access to basic commodities. I asked Abu-Mazin whether the Palestinian demand that the negotiations between the PLO and Israel be resumed had been accepted.

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['Abbas] *I do not think that the Israelis will not continue negotiations with us. I do not think that the Israelis now are pessimistic of the whole peace process. We understand their emotion and their sadness for these acts that have taken place in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, and Ashqelon, but I think that they will overcome.*

[Gus translates above remarks into Hebrew and continues] Once again, we asked Abu-Mazin whether the Palestinian authorities would adopt new steps against Islamic terrorism following the Sharm al-Shaykh summit.

['Abbas] *We are taking measures against all these groups, and I think we are going to root out them.*

[Gus translates above remarks and continues] That was Abu-Mazin's promise.

Palestinian Affairs: Cabinet Views Summit, 'Negative Effects' of 'Siege'

JN1603151896 Gaza Palestinian Broadcasting Corporation Television Network in Arabic 1300 GMT 16 Mar 96

[Announcer-read report over video]

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat chaired the weekly cabinet session today. The cabinet discussed the negative effects of the Israeli military siege on the Palestinian territory and the latest developments in the region in light of the Sharm al-Shaykh summit. President 'Arafat briefed the cabinet on the results of his meeting with Turkish President Suleyman Demirel and [illegible]s meetings with the leaders and heads of states who participated in the Sharm al-Shaykh summit.

Palestinian Affairs: PNC Chairman on Israeli Measures, Charter Amendment

NC1903074796 Cairo Voice of the Arabs in Arabic 0610 GMT 19 Mar 96

[Telephone interview with Palestine National Council Chairman Salim al-Za'nun in Gaza by Fawzi al-Jundi in Cairo; date not given; from the "Dialogue From Afar" program — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Al-Jundi] Can you give our Arab listeners an idea about the present situation in the areas under the Palestinian Authority's [PA] control?

[Al-Za'nun] After the PA condemned the recent operations undertook measures no one else could have taken to eliminate the perpetrators, the Israeli side should have reciprocated by curbing the measures it had adopted with the excuse of maintaining security and protecting the Israeli citizen. We appreciate the motives for imposing the security siege. But Israel should not appear before the world as the party that shows total disregard for the Palestinian citizen by endangering his children, daily bread, and livelihood.

[Al-Jundi] But reports coming from the PA areas indicate that Israel has partly curbed its security siege.

[Al-Za'nun] This is true. But more speed is needed. The harm inflicted on the Palestinian economy and the impact left on the lives of the people and their movement are still taking their toll on all aspects of life in Gaza and the West Bank.

[Al-Jundi] Do you believe that the peace process started to take the right course after Sharm al-Shaykh summit, particularly after the setback in the wake of the explosions in Israel?

[Al-Za'nun] I am certain that if it were not for the efforts of Presidents Mubarak and Chirac, and the change in the U.S. position, which used to tilt somewhat toward the Israeli side, the Sharm al-Shaykh summit would not have been able to save the peace process in general and maintain a kind of balance between the Israeli demand for security and the Palestinian demand for dismissing mass punishments and measures that endanger the lives of the Palestinian people.

[Al-Jundi] There are three main events now: The early Israeli elections slated for May, the final status negotiations, and Israel's demand to amend the PLO charter. As far as the last point is concerned, will the amendment be made before negotiations on the final status start and before the Israeli elections are held?

[Al-Za'nun] The second Oslo agreement stipulates that within two months from the first session of the Legislative Council, the Palestine National Council [PNC] shall be invited to meet to discuss the amendment. We are faithful to that pledge. Since that time we have been taking the necessary preparations to hold the PNC session. We are considering all the possibilities to arrive at the optimal way to do that.

However, it should be clear that if Israel is slow to complete the necessary measures to allow all the PNC members to enter the homeland, or if it prevents any member from entering the homeland, it will be responsible for delaying the PNC meeting.

[Al-Jundi] Do you think that the recent explosions in Israel have forced the PA to step up the amendment of the charter?

[Al-Za'nun] There is no connection between the two things. However, I would like to say that if the Israeli measures persist and if the harassment of the Palestinian people continues to restrict their travel within the West

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Bank and between it and Gaza, this will have a negative effect on the PNC members, who are requested to be convinced of the need for the amendment.

[Al-Jundi] Then what is required is to provide a favorable climate for holding the PNC meeting on Palestinian soil.

[Al-Za'nun] Indeed.

[Al-Jundi] What will Israel offer in this connection? Is lifting the security siege sufficient?

[Al-Za'nun] I think that it will have a considerable impact. There is something else. If it is true that Israel does not want to withdraw from Hebron on 28 March as a result of some conditions, this will cause all the PNC members coming from Hebron, and they are many, to stand against the amendment.

[Al-Jundi] This confirms the fact that stepping up the implementation of the agreements the Israelis and the Palestinians signed is the optimal way to complete the peace process.

[Al-Za'nun] Certainly. Both sides have committed themselves. The Palestinian side has to feel that each party is honoring its commitments in the agreements they signed under international sponsorship.

[Al-Jundi] One last question. Does the Palestinian side expect more open initiatives from Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres, particularly since he is entering the elections with a desire to initiate a certain dialogue with the hardline right in Israel?

[Al-Za'nun] It is regrettable. Shim'on Peres should benefit from the world support he gained in Sharm al-Shaykh and from the world determination to continue the peace process, which consolidated his position and enabled him to bypass the explosions which the right utilized and misused against the peace march.

[Al-Jundi] Thank you.

Palestinian Affairs: Israel Allows Return of 18 Deported PNC Members

TA1803152096 Jerusalem AL-QUDS in Arabic 18 Mar 96 pp 1, 18

[By special AL-QUDS correspondent]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Amman — A PLO official said that Israel has informed the Palestinian Authority [PA] of its consent to the return of 18 deportees who are members of the Palestine National Council [PNC]. It had been reported that the names of these deportees were being checked.

'Abd-al-Ra'uf al-'Alami, director of the PNC speaker's office, cited Jamil al-Tarifi, PA minister of civilian affairs, as saying that the Israeli side officially conveyed to him the Israeli Government's approval of the return of 18 deportees who are PNC members. Moreover, the Israeli Government intends to issue a decision annulling the deportation verdicts issued by Israeli courts against deportees who are PNC members — as a legal loophole for their repatriation and in compliance with Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres' decision to permit the return of all PNC members. [passage omitted]

Palestinian Affairs: Israel To Lift Military Roadblocks

JN1803224796 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1900 GMT 18 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Dr. Sa'ib 'Urayqat, minister of local government and member of the Legislative Council, said that following his contacts with the Israeli side, it was agreed to lift all the military roadblocks on the exits of the Palestinian cities and villages as of tomorrow morning. The roadblocks were erected as part of the Israeli closure of the Palestinian territories.

Palestinian Affairs: Adviser 'Regrets' Peres' Remarks on Hebron Pullout

JN1803154396 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1215 GMT 18 Mar 96

[Telephone interview with Nabil Abu-Rudaynah, adviser to Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat, by Yusuf al-Mahmud in the studio in Jericho; from the "Today's Events" program — live]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Al-Mahmud] Good evening.

[Abu-Rudaynah] Good evening.

[Al-Mahmud] Mr. Nabil Abu-Rudaynah: Through Shim'on Peres, Israel has reiterated its threat to postpone withdrawal from the city of Hebron. What is your comment?

[Abu-Rudaynah] We indeed regret and denounce this surprising Israeli position which linked withdrawal from Hebron to meeting certain conditions. This is a setback in the peace process and a clear violation of the agreement signed with the Israelis.

We hoped that the Israeli side would implement what was agreed. An accurate and honest implementation of the agreements is the solution to all problems and crises. Problems cannot be resolved by punishing the Palestinian people or by going back on what the Israelis have signed.

We were surprised by this position. We hope that the Israeli Government will commit itself to what it signed, especially since we will face many developments,

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beginning with the convening of the Palestine National Council and including the final-phase negotiations.

We believe that Israel's continued procrastination constitutes capitulation to the conditions set by the extremists, whether they are Israeli or Palestinian extremists.

[Al-Mahmud] There was also a certain tone in Peres' remarks. Peres said that if evil is coming from Gaza, they will not withdraw from Hebron and that there is a condition for redeployment in Hebron; namely, arresting the leader of the Hamas [Islamic Resistance] Movement's military wing. Peres also called for deporting some families and demolishing some houses. Are all these not flagrant violations of the agreements?

[Abu-Rudaynah] Yes, these are flagrant violations. We are against deportations, demolishing houses, and confiscating lands. These Israeli measures are rejected. We totally denounce these measures which do not serve the peace process. These measures also create an atmosphere allowing the extremists on both sides to move and achieve their objectives.

[Al-Mahmud] These remarks also coincide with the continued imposition of the siege on Palestine.

[Abu-Rudaynah] Yes. The siege is still imposed, and it is a harsh one. Israel is also imposing collective punishment on the Palestinian people. All this does not serve the peace process and places it in a real impasse. Following the recent Sharm al-Shaykh summit, all parties to the peace process have moved a step forward. The Israeli Government should have proceeded with this spirit, especially since the entire world has unanimously supported the peace process as was clearly shown by the fact that a large number of important foreign and Arab states attended the Sharm al-Shaykh summit.

[Al-Mahmud] Nabil Abu-Rudaynah, adviser to President Yasir 'Arafat: Thank you and goodbye.

[Abu-Rudaynah] Thank you, goodbye.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Asks France To 'Help Us Build Peace'

BR1803150996 Paris LA TRIBUNE DESFOSSES in French 18 Mar 96 p 6

[Report by Eric Revel: "'Arafat to France: 'Help Us Build Peace'"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Today [French Economy Minister] Jean Arthuis will end his trip to the Middle East. The aim of the tour was to provide some tangible support for the peace process following the series of suicide bomb attacks that resulted in the suspension of talks between the Israelis and Palestinians. Mr. Arthuis first met with Yasir 'Arafat in the autonomous region of Gaza. The two men signed a financial protocol worth 85 million francs [Fr], as President Jacques Chirac had indicated they would at the "peacemakers summit" held in Sharm al-Shaykh, Egypt. The minister then went to Israel where he met with Prime Minister Shim'on Peres. Today he will make a quick trip to the Gulf, paying a visit to Kuwait.

In the wake of the summit for peace, France wants to maintain a delicate balance between the two parties. Jacques Chirac denounced the terrorist threat last week, but at the same time highlighted the suffering caused among the Palestinian population by the blockade imposed by Israel on the West Bank and Gaza strip after four suicide bomb attacks by Palestinian fundamentalists which claimed the lives of 61 people over a two-week period. "We need your help, because if the peace process were to suffer it would have repercussions for stability in the region as well as the world," 'Arafat told LA TRIBUNE DESFOSSES at the end of his meeting with Jean Arthuis. The PLO leader pointed an accusing finger at "Iran, Libya, and also Jordan," which stand accused "of helping the Islamic extremists." While on the subject he claimed once again that "Palestinian and Israeli extremists" were plotting together and even spoke of a "real Israeli secret army organization."

At the economic level UN representative Terje Larsen said that the blockade in the Palestinian territories would "soon create an explosive situation." From this point of view the situation of the fishermen in the port of Gaza, to whom the Fr85 million in French aid have been earmarked, primarily for port infrastructures, served as an example: "Our boats may no longer stray more than 3 km from the coast because Israeli patrol boats open fire. Yet one third of the protein consumed here in Gaza comes from seafood. The blockade on the territories is intolerable," Yasir 'Arafat lashed out.

If the Palestinians are to become independent of the opening or closing of the borders between Israel and the Palestinian autonomous regions, the PLO leader believes that "the construction of the port of Gaza and of an airport is vital." For the port, the Palestinian president is seeking "a third partner" in addition to France and the Netherlands. "It could be a Palestinian company. Two of them have pulled off major deals in the Gulf states." As for the airport, "Germany and Spain are interested in the hardware, and Egypt in the infrastructure. But here too Palestinian solutions will have to be found."

Both Yasir 'Arafat and his Finance Minister Muhammad al-Nashashibi explained to Jean Arthuis their desire to see "the local share in the financial protocols remain at

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a correct level." Today, 20 percent of French donations go to local craftsmen in the form of contracts. "Help us build peace," the PLO leader appealed to the French economy minister. Officials at the French Economy Ministry are thinking of establishing a law to protect French investments in Palestine. A law of this kind presupposes that the Palestinian Authority first be given a constitution.

Palestinian Affairs: France's Arthuis Outlines Aid to Palestinians

BR1803145996 Paris LE FIGARO in French 18 Mar 96 p 8

[Report by Florence Compain: "Paris to the Rescue of the Palestinian Territories"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Gaza — "The economy is serving the cause of peace," French Economy Minister Jean Arthuis said on Saturday [16 March] after signing a financial aid protocol for 1996 with Palestinian leader Yasir 'Arafat.

Jacques Chirac had set the tone at the Sharm al-Shaykh summit when he called for "greater mobilization of the main contributing countries" in favor of the Palestinians. In Gaza on Saturday Jean Arthuis "fleshed out" the president's message. The French envelope, containing 85 million francs [Fr] — comprising gifts exclusively — constitutes an effort that is 30 percent up on 1995.

The subsidies will mainly serve to finance the preparatory work being done for the port of Gaza (Fr50 million) in which several French companies are involved, including Spie Batignolles and Dumez. Projects to do with water purification, public lighting, and hospital equipment are also planned. [passage omitted]

Furthermore, Fr5 million will be earmarked for the development of the private industry. This comes on top of a line of credits worth Fr20 million awarded to small private projects in 1993.

Although Paris' gesture is rapid, coming just a few days after the Sharm al-Shaykh summit, it remains modest. By adding credits worth Fr25 million for cultural, scientific, and technological cooperation, bilateral aid will total just Fr110 million. "We are around average," Jean Arthuis maintained. For France is also channeling aid to the Palestinian Authority via the EU, the main provider of funds for the Palestinians, accounting for 45 percent of all the financial aid promised to Yasir 'Arafat. In 1996 the French share in this should amount to Fr120 million.

Apart from the symbolism of his gesture, Jean Arthuis intends to urge on French companies that are not yet firmly established in the region. The objective is clear. "The consecration of our efforts will involve the establishment of French companies. I want them to participate in the major infrastructure projects planned within the territories thanks to the unblocked aid. For the time being," he said, "we are acting on the environment. We must first create an atmosphere of stability and legal security. In this context we have a mutual protection plan for any agreements."

Palestinian Affairs: Al-Za'nun—Opposition To Be Offered Cabinet Portfolios

TA1803164796 Ramallah AL-AYYAM in Arabic 17 Mar 96 pp 1, 18

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Gaza, AL-AYYAM — Salim al-Za'nun, alias Abu-al-Adib, acting Palestine National Council speaker, has said that the new Palestinian government will be formed within two weeks.

In a statement to AL-AYYAM, Abu-al-Adib said that President 'Arafat is continuing his consultations toward this end and that next week he will meet with figures from Jerusalem, Gaza, and the West Bank.

He added that cabinet portfolios will be offered to opposition figures elected to the Legislative Council. He said that, for example, if the Popular and Democratic Fronts for the Liberation of Palestine respond favorably, both of them might participate in the new government.

Abu-al-Adib stressed the need for Israel's withdrawal from Hebron at the predetermined date so that this does not affect other dates, particularly the convocation of the Palestine National Council. [passage omitted]

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Algeria

Algeria: Car Bomb Explodes in Tizi Ouzou

LD1803181996 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in French 1700 GMT 18 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Six people were killed and 21 injured — including two seriously — in a car bomb attack in Tizi Ouzou. The attack took place around 1415 hours in the western district. The vehicle was parked near the security headquarters of Tizi Ouzou.

Mustapha Benmansour, the interior minister, has visited the scene of the attack. He was accompanied by the general director of national security and the local authorities.

Rescue teams and security forces have also gone to the scene to assist and tend to the casualties of this blast.

Algeria: More on Explosion in Crowded Area of Tizi Ouzou

LD1803180296 Paris Radio France International in French 1500 18 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Last-minute news from Algeria: A violent explosion occurred early this afternoon on the outskirts of Tizi Ouzou, capital of Kabylie district. The explosion was reportedly caused by a booby-trapped vehicle in the area of the central police station, not far from the bus station — a very crowded place. There are no other details at present.

Algeria: Bomb Blast in Village Near Sidi Namane; 5 Children Injured

LD1903092496 Paris France-2 Teletext in French 1841 GMT 18 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] There was a blast in a village near Sidi Namane in Kabylie on Monday [18 March]. Five children were injured, one seriously, national radio announced in Tizi Ouzou. The bomb exploded in the village of (Zeboudj Karaao), about 15 km from Tizi Ouzou. [passage omitted]

Egypt

Egypt: UN's Butrus-Ghali on Sharm-al-Shaykh Results

MM1803143496 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 17 Mar 96 p 4

[Interview with UN Secretary General Butrus Butrus-Ghali by Sawsan Abu-Husayn in Cairo; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Abu-Husayn] How do you view the results of the Sharm-al-Shaykh summit conference?

[Butrus-Ghali] These results can be summed up in three main objectives, which are.

1) The bolstering of the peace process; the call for the resumption of negotiations on all tracks and the speeding up of the implementation of the accords on the Palestinian-Israeli track.

2) The enlightenment of the international community on the dangers inherent in terrorism through the international demonstration that took place at the Sharm-al-Shaykh conference and the warning about the universality of terrorism.

3) The affirmation that terrorism is not confined to one region to the exclusion of other regions.

[Abu-Husayn] Why did not the conference specify the names of the countries that support terrorism as some sort of affirmation of their conviction?

[Butrus-Ghali] The United Nations participated in the conference in its capacity as an invited international organization and not as an organizer of this conference. However, I believe that the reason for not specifying the names of the countries was to affirm firstly that peace is a genuine and principal objective of the conference and [secondly] that combating terrorism is another endeavor intended to bolster and prop the peace process and the achievement of a just and comprehensive peace on all tracks.

[Abu-Husayn] What role is the United Nations expected to play in bolstering the peace process?

[Butrus-Ghali] The United Nations was founded for the sake of peace and the realization of universal peace and security for all, the defense of the peoples' security, the exertion of efforts to settle conflicts by peaceful means, the promotion of disarmament, and the enhancement of international cooperation on the grounds that this would also constitute a step toward the realization of peace.

[Abu-Husayn] Turkish President Suleyman Demirel has called for the implementation of economic measures against the countries that encourage terrorism. Will the United Nations sponsor this call in its fight against terrorism?

[Butrus-Ghali] Such calls have to be discussed first by the UN Security Council, which is the body responsible for decisionmaking.

[Abu-Husayn] Will economic sanctions be imposed on Sudan a matter which is now before the UN Security Council for discussion?

[Butrus-Ghali] The question of Sudan and Ethiopia is still revolving within the framework of efforts being exerted by the OAU. We hope Sudan will respond to UN demands in this regard.

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[Abu-Husayn] Now that the second round of negotiations has been resumed between the United Nations and Iraq concerning the implementation of Resolution 986 on "oil for food," has there been any response from the Iraqi side?

[Butrus-Ghali] As long as negotiations are still going on, then there must be some response. I am in constant touch with the dialogue committee. Once the round ends, its results will be announced, because we can hardly announce now the results of something that is still under discussion.

[Abu-Husayn] But the Iraqi Government is determined to work for the implementation of the resolution providing for "oil for food." Did you feel this determination?

[Butrus-Ghali] Yes, but what is important is the results of the negotiations.

[Abu-Husayn] The countries of the Nonaligned Movement have asked the United Nations to lift the sanctions imposed on Libya and warned that they will not comply with the resolutions taken against Libya in the event of the United Nation's rejecting their demand. What do you say to that?

[Butrus-Ghali] I have nothing to say in this regard. It is the UN Charter that decides what would be said and what position would be taken and the importance of adhering to this Charter. This takes precedence over all other demands.

[Abu-Husayn] Are there any positive indications with regard to the lifting of the blockade on Libya?

[Butrus-Ghali] Contacts are still continuing between me and Libya and I hope that through the efforts being exerted at present, Libya will implement the UN Security Council resolutions and then the sanctions on Libya will be lifted.

[Abu-Husayn] Is there anything new with regard to the Yemeni-Eritrean conflict?

[Butrus-Ghali] We are following the efforts being exerted within the framework of the French initiative that calls for settlement of the conflict by peaceful means and the avoidance of the escalation of the situation.

[Abu-Husayn] Let us go back once more to the results of the Sharm-al-Shaykh summit conference. I have learned that you will be one of the members of the committee set up to implement the summit conference's resolutions. Is that so?

[Butrus-Ghali] Consultations are still in progress concerning the work of this committee. My membership of the committee is just like the membership of all the participating countries. We will put forward the UN report on combating terrorism which contains many details. I have great hopes of achieving positive results soon.

[Abu-Husayn] Do you not think that the absence of Syria and Lebanon from the conference had an impact on the formation of the Arab and international collective action?

[Butrus-Ghali] The question of participation and nonparticipation is not confined to that conference alone. Some countries fail sometimes to attend even UN conferences, but this does not detract from the importance of these conferences. Furthermore, if we were to look at the Arab participation, we would note that 18 of the 22 Arab countries participated in the Sharm-al-Shaykh summit conference. This is a good percentage. We hope that Syria will join us in the coming days so as to preserve the efforts for the establishment of peace and the resumption of negotiations with Israel until the achievement of a complete settlement.

Egypt: Mubarak Receives Message of Appreciation From 'Arafat

NC1903130396 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1235 GMT 19 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 19 Mar (MENA)—President Husni Mubarak has received a message from Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat. In his message 'Arafat praises Egypt's and President Husni Mubarak's effective role in the international summit of the peacemakers held in Sharm al-Shaykh on Wednesday [13 March]. He also highlighted that the Egyptian role has greatly impressed the Palestinian Arab people.

Egypt: Joint Communique With Lebanon Issued

NC1803151896 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1413 GMT 18 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 18 Mar (MENA)—Egypt and Lebanon today emphasized the importance of exerting efforts to pursue the peace process on all tracks. The aim is to establish a just and comprehensive peace, based on Security Council resolutions 242 and 338, the principle of land for peace, and Israel's withdrawal from all occupied Lebanese territories and the Golan.

The two sides issued a joint communique, released in Cairo and Beirut today, on Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri's visit to Egypt and his talks with Prime Minister Dr. Kamal al-Janzuri. In the communique, the two sides stressed the need to recognize the Palestinian people's legitimate rights, including their right to self-determination and an independent state.

The Egyptian-Lebanese communique said the two sides discussed ways to consolidate bilateral relations to serve

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the two peoples' interests and joint action. They also discussed increasing trade exchanges, expeditiously drafting a new trade agreement, setting up joint marketing companies, and benefiting from free zones in Lebanon that stockpile Egyptian products.

The communique added that the two sides also discussed establishing a joint chamber of commerce and encouraging the exchange of visits between businessmen of the two countries.

The communique said that Rafiq al-Hariri conveyed to President Mubarak Lebanese President Ilyas al-Hirawi's greetings and his view on the latest developments in the Arab arena and the Middle East, developments in the peace process, issues of common interest, and ways to consolidate relations between the two fraternal countries in all spheres.

The communique also mentioned the talks held between Prime Minister Dr. Kamal al-Janzuri and al-Hariri on developments in the Middle East. The talks showed two sides' concurrence on the importance of exerting efforts to pursue the peace process on all tracks. The aim is to establish a just and comprehensive peace based on Security Council resolutions 242 and 338, the principle of land for peace, Israel's withdrawal from all occupied Lebanese territories and the Golan, and the recognition of the Palestinian people's legitimate rights, including their right to self-determination and an independent state.

The communique added that the two sides discussed ways to consolidate bilateral relations to serve the Egyptian and Lebanese peoples' interests and joint Arab action.

The two sides discussed increasing trade exchanges, expeditiously drafting a new trade agreement, and establishing joint marketing companies. They also discussed the possibility of benefiting from companies in Lebanese free zones that stockpile Egyptian products prior to exporting them to Lebanese markets and neighboring countries.

The Egyptian and Lebanese sides discussed a proposal to set up exhibitions for the direct sale of Egyptian and Lebanese products in the two countries. They also discussed setting up a joint chamber of commerce and encouraging the exchange of visits between businessmen in the two countries.

The communique added that the Egyptian side welcomed a Lebanese offer to designate a permanent wing for Egyptian products at the Rashid Karami Exhibition in Lebanon's Tripoli.

The Egyptian and Lebanese sides also discussed the issue of Egyptian workers in Lebanon. Agreement was reached that the concerned Egyptian and Lebanese ministers would continue discussion of this issue later.

The Lebanese side welcomed the Egyptian companies' participation in the plan to rebuild Lebanon. The Egyptian side agreed to facilitate the import of Lebanese apples, within the framework of the two countries' existing laws.

The communique also noted that an agreement was signed at the conclusion of the visit that encourages and protects mutual investments and lays down regulations for undertaking investment projects in the two countries and ensures full guarantees for these investments.

Another agreement to prevent dual taxation was also signed with the aim of encouraging investments between the two countries.

The two prime ministers signed an agreement to establish the higher joint Egyptian-Lebanese committee, which will hold its periodic meetings alternatively in Cairo and Beirut under the chairmanship of the prime ministers and in the presence of the concerned ministers.

The communique noted the formation of a preparatory committee that will prepare for the meetings of the joint higher committee and follow up the implementation of its decisions.

The committee's meetings in Cairo were attended on the Egyptian side by Dr. Yusuf Wali, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Agriculture; Petroleum Minister Dr. Hamdi al-Banbi; Dr. Yusuf Butrus Ghali, Minister of State at the Cabinet Office; Manpower Minister Ahmad al-'Amawi; Trade and Supplies Minister Dr. Ahmad al-Juwayli; Finance Minister Dr. Muhyi-al-Din al-Gharib; Cabinet Affairs Minister Counselor Tal'at Hammad; Industry Minister Engineer Sulayman Rida; and Dr. Nawal al-Tatawi, Minister of Economy and International Cooperation.

The meetings were attended on the Lebanese side by Minister of State Qabalan 'Isa al-Khuri; Agriculture Minister Shawqi Fakhuri; Industry and Oil Minister Shahi Barsumian; Fu'ad al-Sinyurah, Minister of State for Financial Affairs; and Economy and Trade Minister Yasin Jabir.

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Egypt: Mubarak Message to Peres on Palestinians, Military Activity

NC1903110696 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1040 GMT 19 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Aswan, 19 Mar (MENA)—President Husni Mubarak has sent a message to Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres.

Dr. Usamah al-Baz, first Foreign Ministry under secretary and director of the President's Office for Political Affairs, today stated that the message deals with the situation in the Palestinian territories and the need to lift the remaining restrictions on inhabitants, that is, concerning the movement of both people and goods.

Al-Baz added that the message also deals with the need to maintain self-restraint on the Lebanese-Israeli border.

Dr. al-Baz said the president has received a reply from the Israeli prime minister.

Egypt: 'Tension' Delays Parliamentary Visit to Israel

NC1803154596 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1457 GMT 18 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 18 Mar (MENA)—A diplomatic source has said that the reason for the postponement of the Egyptian parliamentary delegation's visit to Israel, which was scheduled to take place today, is the tension in Israeli-Palestinian relations arising from the Israeli security blockade of the Palestinian self-rule areas in the wake of the suicide operations against the Israelis.

The source said that this visit is expected to be realized soon, considering the improvement in Palestinian-Israeli relations as a result of the Sharm al-Shaykh summit of peacemakers, which underlined the need to save the Middle East peace process and to continue the negotiations.

Egypt: Musa Discusses Asian Trip, Bahrain, Peacemakers Summit

NC1803084496 Cairo Voice of the Arabs in Arabic 0610 GMT 18 Mar 96

[Telephone interview with Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa, in Seoul, by Fayiz al-Miliji, in Cairo; date not given; from the "Dialogue From Afar" program — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Al-Miliji] We welcome Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa as our guest on the Voice of the Arabs.

[Musa] Thank you.

[Al-Miliji] Minister, can you tell us the nature of your current visit to South Korea?

[Musa] This is the first visit by an Egyptian official to one of the economic tigers in Southeast Asia on the political level. Talks will focus on bilateral and economic relations—on trade and how to boost it, investment, tourism, and other issues. We will also sign various agreements. I will meet the Korean president and deliver a message to him from President Mubarak. Then I will travel to Malaysia for the same purpose and afterward to Thailand. This is my first tour of the region; it is important for economic progress in Egypt and the Middle East in general.

[Al-Miliji] Minister, will discussions focus on economic aspects only or will they touch on political issues?

[Musa] Of course discussions will touch on political issues. But economic topics will be the core of contacts and the essence of the visit.

[Al-Miliji] What are the most important political topics that you and officials in South Korea will discuss?

[Musa] There will be political discussions and an exchange of views on the great activity in the Pacific region, such as in Southeast Asian groupings, groupings in the Pacific region as a whole, and groupings with the United States and Canada on the other side of the Pacific. These groupings include all the big Pacific rim countries. Such groupings are a very important development, one we should not ignore or disregard. At the same time peace in the Middle East is important for these countries in terms of trade and investment. This will be the essence of our discussions.

[Al-Miliji] Egypt has recently been moving toward establishing a new kind of cooperation in the form of a partnership with the United States first and then with the European Union. With regard to Asia and the Asian tigers in particular, what is the scope of the expected cooperation?

[Musa] This is what we will start discussing with them. We understand that what is happening is part of Egypt's external economic policy, whether on the European level in the partnership negotiations or the U.S. level with regard to the partnership negotiations with the United States. The Asian aspect remains important. We need to discover the dimensions of this Asian aspect. They need to learn about our needs, we need to learn about theirs, and everyone needs to find out about cooperation. This is a very promising area, rather, the fields for cooperation in it are very promising.

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[Al-Miliji] Minister, you stopped over in Manama on your way to the Asian countries. What is Egypt's stance on the recent events in Bahrain?

[Musa] I expressed this stance in Bahrain and said that Egypt is opposed to everything that shakes or unsettles the stability of the Arab countries. Therefore this requires action to stop any violence against Arab societies. Progress in the region should be peaceful and even if there are problems in the region they should be solved in peaceful ways through dialogue or otherwise. But violence can only be confronted through force, because shaking Arab societies, particularly now, does not serve the Arab people, nations, or masses.

[Al-Miliji] Did you meet any Bahraini officials?

[Musa] There was no visit to Bahrain. The plane only stopped over in Bahrain. The foreign minister was in Riyadh attending the Gulf Cooperation Council meetings. The Foreign Ministry undersecretary was at the airport only for a courtesy welcome.

[Al-Miliji] Minister, with respect to the Summit of Peacemakers and the committee formed by the summit to implement its resolutions, we recently heard a statement from you in which you said that the committee will meet within a couple of weeks. What is new on this?

[Musa] There is nothing new on this so far.

[Al-Miliji] With regard to cooperation in countering violence and strengthening the Middle East peace process, what kind of contacts have there been among Egypt, the Palestinians, and the Israelis?

[Musa] Contacts with the Palestinian side are ongoing. The time has not yet come for other contacts. The conference convened to discuss how to protect the peace process. As part of the measures for protecting the peace process, discussions focused on the violence that is taking place. These contacts will continue and intensify, particularly with the Palestinian and Arab sides, before the meetings that might take place in two weeks' time.

[Al-Miliji] To conclude this dialogue, we thank our listeners and Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa, who was with us on the line from Seoul.

[Musa] Thank you.

Libya

Libya: Demonstrators Protest Sharm al-Shaykh Resolutions

LD1803150696 Tripoli Great Jamahiriyah Radio Network in Arabic 1330 GMT 18 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Workers staged a demonstration of anger and condemnation against the Sharm al-Shaykh summit which was dedicated to serve the aims of the Israeli enemy and to allow them to commit their odious crime of killing the Palestinian Arab national Yahya Ayyash and the destruction of his family home in front of the whole world.

The demonstrators chanted slogans rejecting the agreements of capitulation and normalization with the Israeli enemy, outside the UN mission in the Great Jamahiriyah. They called on Arab workers to reject the Sharm al-Shaykh resolutions which are a calamity for the Arab homeland, its security, and its sovereignty. [passage omitted]

Sudan

Sudan: State Calls For New Recruits To Report for Duty

EA1803180396 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 0800 GMT 18 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The coordinator of the Popular Defense Forces in Khartoum State has issued a circular calling on all mujahidin to join the (Zakirin) Popular Defense Force Brigade, which is about to move to the theatre of operations [presumably in southern Sudan] on 8th April.

The circular requested the mujahidin to report daily at specified assembly points in towns and provinces, before leaving on 8th April from the Popular Defense Forces coordination office in Khartoum state.

Sudan: Minister To Counter Allegations at Geneva Rights Meeting

EA1803174396 Omdurman Republic of Sudan Radio Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 17 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The minister of justice and the attorney general, Mr. 'Abd-al-Aziz Shiddu, has affirmed that Sudan will take part in the 52nd session of the international human rights commission, which begins in Geneva tomorrow [18 March].

Mr. Shiddu said that Sudan's delegation would counter all allegations directed against the country.

During this session, Mr. Shiddu confirmed that Sudan's delegation would present a report refuting all the false

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allegations directed against it in the report by the UN special rapporteur for human rights in Sudan, Mr. Caspar Biro.

Mr. Shiddu added that Mr. Biro did not produce anything new in his report, to be presented at the upcoming session and which recommends the posting of human rights observers in a number of neighboring countries in order to monitor the human rights situation in Sudan.

His Excellency the minister went on to say that Sudan did not see any sense in posting human rights monitors outside the country, because their reports would depend on hearsay and, therefore, would be worthless.

He said the fact that some of these countries are hostile toward Sudan would not help the gathering of objective information on the human rights situation in Sudan.

Mr. Shiddu added that Sudan did not see any necessity in continuing Mr. Caspar Biro's assignment in Sudan and would attempt to have it discontinued.

He confirmed that the special rapporteur on human rights on Sudan was talking about a phase which Sudan had already by-passed through constitutional change.

This transition, Mr. Shiddu said, was crowned with the holding of presidential and parliamentary elections, a fact which Mr. Biro deliberately omitted from his reports.

Sudan: Al-Turabi on Terrorism, Human Rights, Iran, Egypt

BR1803150196 Madrid EL MUNDO in Spanish 18 Mar 96 p 22

[Interview with National Islamic Front of Sudan leader Hasan al-Turabi by Carla Fibla in Khartoum; date not given: "I Do Not Believe in the 'Shiite' or 'Sunni' Concepts" — first paragraph is EL MUNDO introduction]

[FBIS Translated Text] Hasan al-Turabi is the leader of the National Islamic Front [NIF], the only permitted party in Sudan. The real "strong man" of the country — he governs from the shadows — is the man behind the establishment of the Islamic regime that came to power after the 1993 coup. An intellectual educated in France, he is the leader of a current that is trying to renew Islam.

[Fibla] Europe thinks Sudan is the cradle of terrorists.

[Al-Turabi] Sudan's history shows that it is not a terrorist country and that it does not harbor terrorist groups. In Sudan there are many West Africans and we could even make the comparison that there are fewer Palestinians in Sudan than in Great Britain and other European countries.

[Fibla] What about the Afghan situation?

[Al-Turabi] That is a lie. There are no Afghans or Arabs undergoing military training in Sudan. That is purely false propaganda.

[Fibla] In Europe quite critical reports have been published regarding the human rights situation in Sudan.

[Al-Turabi] I know enough about the human rights situation in Europe in times of war and crisis. During such periods they too had political prisoners and the organizations predominated over the liberties of the citizen. There are not many political prisoners in Sudan: At the moment there are no more than 37, whereas neighboring countries have thousands of political prisoners.

[Fibla] What is your view of Islamic terrorism?

[Al-Turabi] Europe is seeing the Islamic movements as a sign of the strength of the Muslim nations, but that is not certain. There is currently an intellectual and spiritual uprising which is not directed against anyone and which only seeks self-realization, attempting to form its own historical identity. People are looking inward to liberate the human being. What is certain is that the attitude of these groups can be expressed normally, or when they do not find sufficient liberty then they may have some recourse to violence. However, this is not a sign of Islam, it is something specific to these groups.

[Fibla] What is the NIF?

[Al-Turabi] It is not a political party trying to take in all the Islamic sects existing in Sudan (Ansar al-Sunnah, the Ikhwan, the Khatmiyah, etc.). It is a current of Islam that is trying to renew Islam. It became institutionalized as a political party of an intellectual current which aims to find a modern understanding of society without following any other tendency or party that does not share the same ideology.

[Fibla] Why was the People's Islamic Conference created?

[Al-Turabi] The aim is to have a voice that represents the world's Muslims in international organizations. It was created after the Gulf War to represent the interests of those Muslims without political parties or nationalist causes.

[Fibla] What are the dogmatic differences between Iran and Sudan? Are the major branches of Islam, "Shiite," and the majority "Sunni," really compatible?

[Al-Turabi] I do not believe in the "Shiite" or "Sunni" concepts. They are only historical concepts. It is like in the Bible: Jesus was not a Catholic or a Protestant,

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and the Sudanese generally do not differentiate between Shiite and Sunni.

[Fibla] The war with the Christian militia in the South is continuing.

[Al-Turabi] Since before the independence, the war in the south was due to the British colonization. Before Sudan won its independence the people in the South were asked whether they wanted independence themselves or if they wanted to belong to a united country. They wanted the former and the separatist fighting broke out.

[Fibla] Would one solution be a single country with a zone inhabited by Sudanese who do not follow Islamic law?

[Al-Turabi] The current government is decentralized and we have a federalist system. The zones have free elections.

[Fibla] Why cannot two Arab nations such as Egypt and Sudan live together?

[Al-Turabi] In the 19th century Egypt colonized Sudan. After independence Egypt saw that Sudan was rich and that it is governed by the current Islamic current, while Egypt lags behind us on that score. It is all about jealousy. The faith is very strong in Egyptian society but is less strong as you rise up through the country's leadership. In Sudan it is the other way around and that is why Egypt is afraid that Sudan could influence Egyptian society with its tendency toward uprising. This is why it supports the opposition and the guerrillas.

Sudan: OAU Warns Khartoum Against 'Worsening' Crisis with UN

AB1903133096 Paris AFP in French 2123 GMT 18 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Khartoum, 18 Mar (AFP) — OAU Secretary General Salim Ahmed Salim stated in Khartoum today that he had informed Sudanese President 'Umar al-Bashir on the need to avoid the worsening of the crisis prevailing between him and the United Nations.

In a statement following discussions with Mr. al-Bashir, Mr. Salim stated that he had explained "the seriousness of the crisis confronting his country and the need to avoid that it gets worse," after he was condemned by the Security Council late January for supporting terrorism. The Security Council had summoned Sudan to extradite to Ethiopia three Egyptian fundamentalists accused of being involved in a bungled assassination attempt on Egyptian President Husni Moubarak in Addis Ababa in June 1995. It had also given him a 60-day deadline to abide by the demand.

The issue is expected to be discussed on 31 March by the Security Council which might decree sanctions against Khartoum. It is, however, likely that in the first place, it simply takes symbolic measures that can affect Sudan's diplomatic representation abroad, according to reports from New York.

Mr. Salim stated that his mission to Sudan was "to explain the seriousness of the crisis, because the African continent is affected by the trial of those who committed the crime against Mubarak. The international community expects Sudan to clearly and closely cooperate with the United Nations and the OAU," he added.

According to the OAU official, "General al-Bashir stated that his government was ready to cooperate, but that he needed additional information on the three Egyptians," whose extradition is demanded by Ethiopia.

Mr. Salim left Sudan this evening at the end of a two-day visit during which he held discussions with 'Abd-al-Aziz Shiddu, Sudanese minister of justice; Ghazi Salah al-Din Atabani, secretary general of the National Congress, the highest political body; and Abd al-Rahman Ibrahim, chairman of the commission of inquiry on the wanted Egyptians. He also met with Sudanese Foreign Minister Ali 'Uthman Muhammad Taha and Interior Minister Bakri Hassan Saleh.

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GCC: Shaykh Qasimi on GCC Meeting, Differences Within 'Family'

LD1803194896 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 1345 GMT 18 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Kuwait, 18th March: Shaykh Fahim al-Qasimi, [outgoing] secretary general of the Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC], said today that the GCC states have no option but to achieve further cohesion and unity. He stressed that any differences among them does not have the slightest effect of their deep, historic ties and joint coordination.

In an interview with the Kuwaiti news agency on the sidelines of his visit to Kuwait, Shaykh al-Qasimi said: "The council states have a deep-rooted faith in the importance of the existence and the work of the council and the need to belong to it, and a firm determination to overcome the difficulties in order to make progress, coexist, and compete in the era of international blocs."

Regarding recent differences between Qatar and the other GCC states on the appointment of the GCC secretary general, and Doha's request for an emergency meeting to discuss a plot against the regime, al-Qasimi said: "There are bound to be differences in a family. This is natural and not unusual. In the final analysis, the council is the home of the united Gulf family."

Regarding the file on the request for the coup attempt, announced by Qatar last month, to be discussed, he said: "It has been closed without it being raised or intervention by the foreign ministers of the GCC states at their 58th session which ended in Saudi Arabia yesterday." [passage omitted]

Bahrain

Bahrain: Consultative Council Condemns Recent Arson in Sutrah

JN1903152496 Manama WAKH in Arabic 1220 GMT 19 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Manama, 19 Mar (WAKH) —The Consultative Council held its regular weekly session, which is part of the council's fourth ordinary term, at the council premises this morning under Council Chairman Ibrahim Muhammad Hasan al-Humaydan.

At the end of the session, the council chairman made some remarks, saying that the council reviewed the topics listed on its agenda, chief among which was the statement that denounced the horrendous and criminal arson that took place at a restaurant in the Sutrah area, which killed seven innocent foreigners.

In their speeches, council members strongly regretted and denounced this horrendous crime, which resulted in the killing of a group of innocent people who came to our country to earn a decent living. They asserted that such terrorist acts are far removed from the mettle of our peaceful people. They strongly denounced such dastardly crimes, which aim at undermining the security, safety, and accomplishments of our country. The members expressed the firm position of the Consultative Council, which is supportive of the measures taken by the country's political leadership to keep the peace and safeguard stability. They also commended the efforts made by security men to apprehend the perpetrators of this painful incident without delay, and demanded that a just punishment be meted out against the perpetrators to uphold justice. [passage omitted]

Kuwait

Kuwait: Foreign Minister—Relations With Jordan To Be Normalized Soon

LD1903103096 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 0936 GMT 19 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Riyadh, 19 Mar — Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Sabah, the first deputy prime minister and foreign minister, has said: "Kuwaiti-Jordanian relations will be resumed soon and finally normalized following bilateral communications during recent months."

In a statement to the Saudi newspaper UKAZ today, Shaykh Sabah referred to the exchange of letters between his highness the heir apparent and prime minister, Shaykh Sa'ud al-'Abdallah al-Salim al-Sabah, and Jordanian Crown Prince Hasan Bin-Talal.

Shaykh Sabah denied that there had been international pressure on his country to normalize relations with Jordan, and said that the matter "stems from a Kuwaiti conviction."

Shaykh Sabah declined to comment on a question regarding a Kuwaiti-Jordanian summit meeting. He also declined to comment on the possibility of the normalization of Kuwait's relations with the so-called antagonistic states [Arab states that did not condemn the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait].

The first deputy prime minister and foreign minister renewed his country's demand of the international community to continue the pressure on the Iraqi regime to complete the implementation of the remaining resolutions of international legitimacy concerning its aggression against the state of Kuwait, particularly those concerning the release of Kuwaiti and other POW's and detainees. [passage omitted]

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Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia: King Fahd Urges Swift Relaunch of Peace Process

LD1803235696 Riyadh SPA in Arabic
2144 GMT 18 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Jeddah, 18 Mar — King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz Al Sa'ud, custodian of the two holy mosques, has reiterated the commitment of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to a lasting, just, and comprehensive peace in the region, on all the tracks, in accordance with international legality, the Madrid conference, and the principle of land for peace.

In this context, he praised the results of the Peacemakers Summit, held last Wednesday [13 March] in Sharm al-Shaykh, Egypt.

King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, custodian of the two holy mosques, made this statement during the meeting of the cabinet which he chaired at al-Salam Palace, in Jeddah this Monday evening.

Following this meeting, His Excellency Dr. Fu'ad Bin-'Abd-al-Salam al-Farisi, the information minister, made a statement to the Saudi news agency in which he said that the king expressed his appreciation of the efforts made by His Excellency Bill Clinton, President of the United States, by His Excellency President Muhammad Husni Mubarak, and by the participants at the Peacemakers Summit, which aimed at strengthening peace in the region and condemning all kinds of terrorism and violence regardless of their source and justification.

The custodian of the two holy mosques said: "The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia would like the peace process to be relaunched quickly in order to achieve its objectives and remove all obstacles obstructing its path." He praised at the same time the importance of the peace process on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks. [passage omitted]

Saudi Arabia: Islamic Reform Movement Bulletin Issued

MM1903113596 London AL-ISLAH in Arabic
16 Mar 96

[Bulletin No. 1 issued by the Islamic Reform Movement — received by fax]

[FBIS Translated Text] In the name of God, the Merciful and the Compassionate.

With God is the decision, in the past and in the future.

The fate of the call and the banner of reform is neither in the hands of al-Mas'ari [leader of the Committee for the Defense of Legitimate Rights of Saudi Arabia, CDLR] nor in the hands of al-Faqih [leader of the Islamic Reform Movement, IRM]. If any one of them becomes derelict in shouldering his liability and tackling his responsibility, then the call will have God to do so and the banner of reform will never fall.

The Koran settled this issue vis-a-vis people who were better than us before settling it with people like us, saying: "But if these disbelieve therein, then indeed we shall entrust it to people who will not be disbelievers therein." God's Messenger, may God bless his soul and grant him grace, has stated: "There are people within my nation who continue to uphold the right, paying no attention to those who disagree with them or let them down."

There is nothing wrong, to make one feel sorry at what has happened. There is nothing wrong, to make one to feel annoyed at the gloating of the enemies. But it would be wrong and totally wrong for this sorrow and annoyance to turn into despair and frustration, and for one to lose trust in his God and in God's support for his religion and its loftiness.

The feeling of sorrow and annoyance at what has happened and the feeling of disturbance at the gloating of the enemy are all good signs as they indicate one's care for the call and his entertaining a sense of responsibility toward the course of reform, and his belief that he constitutes a part of this great action and his feeling that every catastrophe that befalls this action constitutes a catastrophe for him as well and that every tribulation that befalls the cause constitutes a tribulation to him and every problem that occurs is his problem too. This feeling of agony and suffering prompts one to seek to redress matters as much as he can and to repair the flow with all the power and knowledge he commands and thus all his sorrow and annoyance would turn into a useful and positive action which would help to deliver the call out of its suffering as much as he can.

Desperation and despondency and recourse to expressions and statements intimating that the conflict, dispute, and sedition was only the destiny of the nation and consequently there is no hope for it to rise and succeed and the claim that it would be better to abandon all reform under the pretext of avoidance of sedition and fear of sparking off conflicts, are all indications of weak faith and lack of knowledge about God and his religion. For if one believes in his God's pledge, despair will not be able to find its way into his heart.

When it was proposed to God's Messenger, may God bless his soul and grant him grace, during his darkest hours after he was assaulted by the people of Mecca, expelled by the people of al-Ta'if, and set upon by their

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boys and fools, to apply the law of the mountains against the Akhshabite people of Mecca, he uttered his famous saying: "No. For God might create some descendants of theirs who worship Him." Even in the days before the Prophet Muhammad, may God bless his soul and grant him grace, when Moses, may God bless his soul and grant him grace, fled in fright and took refuge in the shadow of a tree, he thanked God, saying, "O God, I am in need of all that you have given me."

Contrary to what many people believe, the worse things become the closer salvation from these conditions comes. The greater tribulation becomes, the closer victory comes. As long as there are people in the nation with true intentions and good deeds, victory is bound to be there sooner or later.

The call in the Arabian Peninsula has exonerated itself and has provided all necessary proofs and arguments, and a number of sincere advisers and preachers have gone forth to serve the cause of God, of whom some were placed in prison, others were killed, and still others banished.

With the exception of a few people who took an odd course, this group [the Reform movement] has raised God's book and adhered to the teachings of his Messenger, may God bless his soul and grant him grace, and to the religious course. God will not cause it to lose faith or frustrate its hopes. God will honor what He pledged to it. Indeed, it is a fact that no reform group in this age has adhered to the Prophet's teachings and Muhammad's course as much as the Call procession in the Arabian Peninsula has done.

Hence it is only natural, in the face of this adherence to the Right Path, for the opponents of this course and the deviationists to become exposed. They will never delay victory as long as the reform entity has kept away from them and refused to have any connection with them.

We, who are in the movement, give them a special reassurance that we will continue to adhere to the rightful course, as we are probably more capable of doing so now that the right has been established and people have become more capable of distinguishing between things. No consideration or courtesy shall be accorded to him who acts contrary to religious laws.

We do not care about what was said or is being said. God willing, our main concern shall be how to realize our religious commitment and our discipline and how to purify our intentions and our objectives so as to gain divine support, so that calm may penetrate our hearts and God complete the honoring of His pledge to grant victory to the believers.

God's path continues along with steady steps and without any retraction. If what has happened falls within the framework of disputes that can be settled among the various parties and in which the motives of all are purely secular, then undoubtedly the destiny of all shall be failure and loss of power. God Almighty says in his Holy Book: "And fall into no disputes, lest ye lose heart and your power departs." But if what has happened falls within the framework of scrutiny, the casting away of the bad, the clear manifestation of right and the exposure of wrong, then this would be a divine tribulationary test, from which there is no escape. The tribulations that befell the Muslims in al-Madinah helped to expose the hypocrites time and time again, and thus cleared and purified the ranks of the Islamic group and provided protection for its structure and performance. "...That God might test what is in your breasts and purge what is in your hearts, for God knoweth well the secrets of your hearts." [Koranic verse].

With God's help, we in the IRM have decided to consider what has befallen us as a sedition and tribulation that has now been overcome and through which God has helped us to purify our ranks and control our course and procession.

We pledge to the nation that, with God's help, we will become more eager to adhere to the course of religion and the dictates of the Holy Book and the Sunnah and to follow in the footsteps of our good forefathers paying no attention to those who differ with us and those who let us down. We also appeal to the nation to turn the page on what has happened and not to look back and to place its hand in the hands of those of whom it can have faith in their adherence to religion, their sincerity, and their continued march on the road of call, and to feel confident of God's support and depend on God and seek refuge in him in all cases.

Clarifications and Warnings

The IRM denies all the statements attributed by the press to Dr. Sa'd al-Faqih and all the allegations made to the effect that he had leaked personal messages and letters. The only statement which al-Faqih affirms is that in which he refuted charges leveled against him. Al-Faqih is now studying the idea of bringing actions against some of the newspapers over the false statements attributed to him.

Some quarters distributed by fax a statement attributed to the so-called Shura Council of the CDLR. We wish to affirm that no such Council exists at all and that the aforementioned statement was false in part and whole. One of the odd things in that statement, whose fabricator claims it was written at Buraydah, is its encouragement

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of one of the sides to bring a case against the other side in the British courts. Since when do the people of the Arabian Peninsula and particularly those of Buraydah call for litigation between two Muslim parties before an idolatory court?...

With the exception of this week, our bulletin AL-ISLAH will be transmitted on Monday night-Tuesday morning of every week. So the brothers are requested to set their fax machines ready during that night of every week to receive our bulletin.

Saudi Arabia: Letters Between CDLR Chiefs Leaked to Press

96P50061A London AL-HAYAH in Arabic
14 Mar 96 pp 1, 6

[FBIS Translated Text] It is clear from their press campaign, the exchange of accusations between Dr. al-Masa'ri and Dr. Sa'ad al-Faqih, that the war of words has not ended in spite of the fact of the mutual announcement made yesterday which declared the establishment of two new organizations emerging from the remains of the old Committee for the Defense of Legitimate Rights [CDLR]. In the last 24 hours, the public defamation campaign has begun to touch other personalities; some documents and letters containing personal notes have been leaked, damaging the reputation of the people mentioned in them.

It is noteworthy that some of these documents, according to information that AL-HAYAH has obtained from the documents' original holders, were basically aimed only at people directly related to the issue, such as Dr. al-Masa'ri or Dr. al-Faqih or Dr. 'Abd-Allah al-Masa'ri (Muhammad's father). Therefore, these leaks to the press must have been made by the document owners without the intervention of a third party as some of the people close to the former committee had claimed in the past few days.

Dr. al-Masa'ri said in a communique to AL-HAYAH that the other party is the one that violated the commitment to not launch press campaigns. He added that the "Islamic Reform Movement," which is sponsored by Dr. al-Faqih according to the mutual agreement declared two days ago, has given Mr. 'Azam al-Tamimi a forum to speak as he wishes and to spread defamatory reports to the press in a way that violates the agreement decreed by the mediation committee dividing up the properties of the former CDLR. Dr. al-Masa'ri is now the director of the new CDLR.

Al-Masa'ri threatened that he will not stop speaking frankly and revealing wrong-doing unless the other party adheres to the written agreement. He said, "Al-Tamimi has no relationship with the mediation committee at all, therefore he has no right to speak in its name. The committee was comprised only of Abu Ammar and Abu Sidrah. It is strange that al-Tamimi would expose himself thus and declare himself to be a member of the mediation committee despite the fact that he is not. Additionally, he always tries to hide behind the pretext of liberalism.

In other respects, al-Masa'ri asserted that al-Tamimi had had good relations with the CDRL since at least 1992. He explained that he had met him [al-Tamimi] in London of that year on the recommendation of Dr. al-Faqih who seemed to already know him because they both belonged to the Muslim Brotherhood. Al-Tamimi was directing an organization in London called "Liberty for the Muslim World" which used to receive information from the CDLR within [Saudi Arabia] and then redistribute it over international information media.

Al-Masa'ri said: "Al-Tamimi is one of the important persons in Hamas [Islamic Resistence Movement] in London and he was brought up in an environment of political and intellectual agitation. In this respect he is superior to Dr. al-Faqih and influences and directs him. Al-Tamimi is the one who writes and reviews reports for al-Faqih. Al-Faqih trusts al-Tamimi completely and does not reject any requests from him at all. For this reason, he employed him as vice-president of AL-SHAR'IYAH newspaper. There is also a former Sudanese diplomat in London who has a very strong influence on Sa'ad al-Faqih. He is very close to al-Turabi's movement in Sudan."

In response to a question whether al-Tamimi played a role in corrupting the relationship between al-Faqih and al-Masa'ri, al-Masa'ri replied: "I can't really say, but al-Tamimi alleges many untrue things about the mediation committee and the issues of the disagreement. Because he has a great influence on al-Faqih, he inevitably had an important role in intensifying matters."

Al-Masa'ri revealed that the new Defense Committee is occupied now in completing the furnishing of its headquarters to which it has returned. However, he confessed, that the broadcasting that was supposed to begin last December will be handled by al-Faqih and he said that the idea is to transmit via satellite to the Gulf area. He doubted that this project will get off the ground because the human resources are still unprepared; also, it will cost more than half a million pounds sterling, noting that the satellite channels had been reserved already for three months.

For his part, Dr. al-Faqih refused comment on any reports made by Dr. al-Masa'ri yesterday and the day before. He said that he still adheres to the agreement

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reached by the mediation committee which stipulates that they will not engage in any wrangling in the press. Suffice it to say that he is now working on arrangements for his new movement by taking a number of practical steps to begin operations in a few days.

But sources close to the Islamic Reform Movement informed AL-HAYAH that al-Faqih is currently occupied with clarifying the objective of the movement which would be the true extension of the original CDLR which represents the true Islamic current. He added that the changes that Mr. Al-Faqih will make will not be in the ultimate objectives, but rather in the methods of appealing to the masses.

These sources, however, do not doubt that the Movement will respond to al-Masa'ri's continuing allegations, which it considers contrary to the agreement stipulated by the mediation committee; however, they explained that "the nature of the al-Masa'ri group's position will define the actions of the other party." These sources accused al-Masa'ri's group of being responsible for the recent leaks, among which was a message from the researcher Hasan Birqdar to al-Faqih and messages from the attorney Karin Sturdevant to both al-Faqih and al-Masa'ri. They added, "The messages of the attorney show that al-Masa'ri had begun to waste Muslim money on services that could have cost less." What was intended in this case was to oppose the deportation order by the British Minister of Interior ousting al-Masa'ri to the Island of Dominica.

But Mr. 'Azzam al-Tamimi denied al-Masa'ri's accusations against him. He said that he was not a factor in the breakup of the CDLR; that in its dissolution there are no winners, only losers; and those who have penetrated the committee are those who have given it the coup de grace. He emphasized that he speaks from an objective point of view, not from a biased position. He accused the people behind al-Masa'ri of being the reason for the downfall of the Committee because they are people who suddenly came on the scene, some of whom had only vague and suspicious histories.

Al-Tamimi considers that al-Masa'ri is an undesirable person even to the groups that sympathized with the former CDLR. He said that although Dr. al-Masa'ri took the name of the Committee, this will not be sufficient to rejuvenate it. Finally, he assured that the CDLR will gradually vanish until it fades away, even if al-Masa'ri insists on continuing to work.

Yemen

Yemen: Joint Maritime Borders Panel Meets in Sanaa

JN1903122996 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0430 GMT 19 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The joint Yemeni-Saudi committee in charge of marking the maritime borders held its first session in Sanaa last night. The Yemeni side was headed by legal adviser Husayn 'Ali al-Hubayshi. The Saudi side was headed by Ambassador Dr. Muhammad Bin-'Umar Madani, director general of the Saudi Diplomatic Studies Institute.

The committee is expected to discuss ways to demarcate the maritime borders that are on the agenda for this round of talks. The leaders of both countries have issued directives that order the resolution of the various border issues in a way that leads to stability and the development of brotherly relations.

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Iraq: 'Aziz Defends Stand on Inspection Teams

JN1803204896 Baghdad Iraq Television Network in Arabic 1819 GMT 18 Mar 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] Iraq's Permanent UN Ambassador Nizar Hamdum met with the UN Security Council President Botswana's ambassador Legwaila Joseph Legwaila in New York this morning.

Ambassador Hamdun delivered a letter from Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz to the UN Security Council president explaining Iraq's viewpoint on the recent inspection operations. The following is the text of the letter:

His Excellency Legwaila Joseph Legwaila, UN Security Council president, New York:

I would like to explain to you and the Council members the facts concerning the inspection operations inspection team No. 143 carried out 7-17 March 1996 and what the chairman of the Special Commission communicated to the Council in this respect in his letter dated 9 March 1996, S1996/182, a copy of which you handed to our permanent representative.

I. 1. The inspection operations have been taking place since May 1991 in accordance with Resolution 687. The inspection teams have not asked to enter any ministry except in two cases: The first was in 1992 when an inspection team asked to enter the Agriculture Ministry. This resulted in a protracted disagreement between the Iraqi authorities and the Special Commission and which was settled through an agreement I made with the chairman of the Special Commission on the appropriate arrangements for entering the ministry. Following this, the representatives of the Special Commission did not find any of the things they claimed were in the ministry. The second case took place on 8 March 1996 when the head of inspection team No. 143 asked to enter the Irrigation Ministry. A discussion which lasted several hours between representatives from our side and the deputy chairman of the Special Commission who was in Baghdad at the time produced no results. I contacted Rolf Ekeus, chairman of the Special Commission by telephone and agreement was reached with him on the appropriate arrangements for entering the building. This time too, the inspection team did not find what it claimed was in the building, particularly missiles, missile components, and large boxes for keeping documents.

2. On 11 March 1996, the above inspection team asked to enter the Republican Guards Training Institute. In this case too, I had a telephone conversation with Mr. Ekeus who, at the time, was in London. Agreement was reached with him on the appropriate arrangements for entering the building. This took place and the inspection team did not find any of the material it claimed was in the building.

3. On 14 March 1996, the same inspection team asked to visit one of the Special Guards locations. Agreement was reached between the relevant Iraqi officials and the head of the inspection team on the appropriate arrangements for entering it. The same thing took place on 15 March 1996 when the head of the inspection team asked to enter a location belonging to the Republican Guard. After entering these two locations, the inspection team did not find any of the material it claimed was inside.

4. In addition to what was mentioned, the inspection team visited nine other locations during that period. There were no problems in this respect.

II. It appears from the above that the delay which took place before the four referent inspection operations began was caused by the fact that the locations that the inspection team asked to visit are of a special nature; a ministry, and headquarters for establishments of special nature having to do with national security. It is worth mentioning that since the Agriculture Ministry incident in 1992, 104 inspection teams completed their mission without any of them asking to enter any location or establishment of a similar nature to the locations the head of the recent inspection team asked to enter this time. This surprised and worried us.

5. [as heard] It is well known that since Ekeus' visit to Baghdad in July 1993, we reached an agreement that the inspection teams should respect, while fulfilling their missions in accordance with the provisions of Resolution 687, Iraq's sovereignty, dignity, and national security. This was confirmed in Paragraph 16 of the joint report drafted by the two sides on 30 November, 1993 — Document S 2,6825, which stipulated the following:

Regarding Iraq's concerns about respecting its sovereignty, internal security, and dignity on the official and popular levels and respecting Iraq's right to industrial, scientific, technological advancement and development in all fields not included in the embargo stipulated by Resolution 687 for the year 1991 [sentence incomplete]. The Special Commission and the agency [not further explained] said they intend to implement the relevant plan in a manner that will cause the least degree of intrusion and ensure the effectiveness of monitoring and verification under the prevailing circumstances. They noted that Iraq's above-mentioned legitimate concerns should be observed thoroughly, in accordance with the UN Charter.

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III. The other causes of delay upon visits to the four aforesaid sites are:

1. The Iraqi side was surprised when a request was made to inspect the aforementioned sites, whose activities were not questioned over past years. This made it necessary for contacts to be held among concerned officials to study these requests and adopt a proper position toward them.

2. The request to enter the premises of the Irrigation Ministry was made at 2100 on Friday, 8 March, 1996, which is a holiday. Also, the request to enter the premises of the Republican Guards was made on Friday, 15 March, 1996. Carrying out inspections on a holiday will, inevitably, lead to a delay in organizing contacts, as indicated in Paragraph 1, among the concerned officials, who will need some time to return to their official premises to study and address the situation.

3. Entering any site which the inspection team asks to enter requires the attendance of the official in charge of the location as well as an appropriate number of workers so that the team's questions can be answered, the keys of rooms, closets, and stores can be made available, and other requirements, which enable the team to carry out the inspection, can be met. All of this takes time, especially when the inspections take place on holidays or outside official work hours.

4. The discussion between the Iraqi side's representatives and the head of the inspection team on reaching an appropriate arrangement to enter the building and conduct the search without harming anything unrelated to the duties and tasks of the UN Special Commission takes time, especially since some sites are very large and house a large number of installations of different types.

Moreover, the head of the inspection team needs time to contact those with whom he must refer and obtain their approval of the arrangement reached with the Iraqi side.

5. If all the practical matters involved in securing an efficient search are taken into account, the delays which occurred and which were referred to in the message of the UN Special Commission's head, were almost the time taken up by these matters. Added to this are the two telephone contacts between myself and Mr. Ekeus — one was to London — in order to reach understanding based on the UN Special Commission's pledges regarding Iraq's sovereignty, dignity, and national security as well as Iraq's commitments in accordance with the relevant resolutions.

IV: The allegation that delaying the approval to enter these buildings aroused doubts that the materials that were allegedly present could have been moved or destroyed is refuted by the following facts:

1. In the aforementioned cases, the requests by the inspection teams were usually submitted suddenly. In other words, the inspection team would arrive at the site it wanted to search without prior notice.

2. After the inspection team arrived at the specific site, the site was surrounded by the inspection team members from all sides.

3. The team which conducted the recent searches exceeded 50 persons accompanied by 16 vehicles. This is a sufficient number to surround the building from all sides and control its entrances and exits.

4. When an inspection team arrived at a certain site, the UN Special Commission's helicopters overflew this site to make sure that nothing was moved from the building.

5. These helicopters took pictures of the site before, during, and after the search. By comparing the pictures, it can be ascertained whether any large equipment was moved in trucks proportional to its size and weight, especially since the recent team—as we were told—was searching for missiles, missile components, missile launchers, and large boxes for storing documents.

Only in two cases during the recent searches did the helicopters not overfly the site for a short period of between 20 and 30 minutes, because their fuel ran out. It is illogical that a significant change in the site could be made during this period.

6. It is very easy for the inspection teams to ascertain whether or not documents have been destroyed.

For these practical and scientific reasons, the allegations that a change in the condition of the site was possible, that equipment was removed from it, or that documents were burned, are not in line with reality.

V. Jumping to the conclusion that what happened in the last few days constitutes a policy of obstructing the Special Commission's work is completely wrong and baseless.

I emphasize in the name of the Iraqi Government that the Iraqi authorities have no intention to obstruct the missions of the Special Commission in Iraq. On the contrary, we have emphasized at the highest levels our determination to continue relations of understanding and joint action to achieve the tasks of the Special Commission as soon as possible. All Special Commission reports in this respect during the past period emphasize this fact.

While I repeat and emphasize this fact, I expect the head and representatives of the Special Commission to abide

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by their commitments toward Iraq through respecting its sovereignty, dignity, and its national security while carrying out their duties in Iraq.

I also expect the Security Council to deal with the subject in an objective manner that strikes a balance between Iraq's commitments toward the Security Council and the Security Council's commitments toward Iraq in accordance with the UN Charter and its relevant resolutions.

Kindly accept my best wishes and respect.

[Signed] Tariq 'Aziz, deputy prime minister, Baghdad, 17 March 1995

Iraq: Al-Anbari Says 'Progress' Achieved at 2d Round of UN Talks

JN1903155096 Baghdad Iraq Television Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 19 Mar 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] Iraq and the United Nations on 8 April will hold a third round of the technical dialogue on exchanging oil for food, medicine, and basic needs for the Iraqi people. Dr. 'Abd-al-Amir al-Anbari, head of the Iraqi delegation, met with Legal Adviser Hans Corell, head of the UN delegation, yesterday evening. The head of the Iraqi delegation said he believes that the third round of dialogue will be extremely important in order to arrive at a memorandum of understanding between Iraq and the United nations on this issue.

The head of the Iraqi delegation pointed out that during the second round, which officially ended yesterday evening, the two sides were able to achieve progress. He pointed out that the two sides agreed on relevant issues, as well as on exporting and marketing oil. In statements to reporters, al-Anbari added that the third round will tackle topics related to the distribution of foodstuffs, medicine, and the other basic needs all over Iraq.

For his part, Legal Adviser Hans Corell told reporters following the conclusion of the second round of dialogue that the two sides made very significant progress. He added that the head of the Iraqi delegation will return to Baghdad to present his report to his superiors. The UN legal adviser said that the two sides are discussing an Iraqi-UN memorandum of understanding on exchanging oil for food, medicine, and other basic needs, asserting that the two sides achieved a great deal of progress in this direction.

Hans Corell added: This is a very important issue. When we reach a final agreement, the deal will be complete and will be carried out. The legal adviser said he is confident that both sides would be able to resolve the outstanding issues regarding the distribution of the food stuffs and medicine. He said he is certain that this solution will be acceptable to both parties.

Iraq: Third Round of Dialogue With UN Team To Begin 8 Apr

JN1803195296 Baghdad Iraq Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 18 Mar 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] Iraq and the United Nations today agreed to set 8 April for holding the third round of dialogue on oil for food, medicine, and other basic needs for the Iraqi people. A spokeswoman for the UN secretary general announced that the agreement was reached during a telephone call today between UN Secretary General Butrus Butrus-Ghali and Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz.

The spokeswoman pointed out that the date was chosen because of the UN secretary general's planned private tour of some Asian states. She also said that the UN secretary general was very upset by the suffering of the Iraqi people and that he attached great importance to the implementation of the agreement between Iraq and the United Nations.

An IRAQI NEWS AGENCY correspondent in New York said it was decided that Dr. 'Abd-al-Amir al-Anbari, head of the Iraqi delegation, would meet with Hans Corell, UN legal adviser and head of the UN delegation, late this evening, Baghdad time.

UN diplomatic sources expected the third round of dialogue scheduled for April to be the final round and to produce an agreement on oil for food, medicine, and other basic needs. They also expected Iraq to begin exporting its oil within less than a month after reaching an agreement with the United Nations during the third round of dialogue.

At the same time, Iraq and its friends are continuing efforts to implement Paragraph 22 of Resolution 687, which calls for lifting the economic blockade on Iraq.

In an exclusive statement to the U.S. Economic News Agency, Dow-Jones, Dr. 'Abd-al-Amir al-Anbari said that during the second round of dialogue, the two sides agreed to solve problems related to oil production and marketing. He added: The decision to begin exporting oil from al-Bakr port or the Turkish port of Ceyhan depends on who will be the importer. If the importer is from southeast Asia, oil will be exported from al-Bakr port, but if the importer of Iraqi oil is from Europe, oil will be exported via the Turkish port of Ceyhan.

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Iraq: Chief Delegate Expects 8 Apr Signing of 'Oil-for-Food' Deal

MM1903110596 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 19 Mar 96 pp 1, 6

[Report by Raghidah Dirgham: "Oil-for-Food Negotiations: Third Round 'for Signing' To Be Held 8 April"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] New York — 'Abd-al-Amir al-Anbari, head of the Iraqi delegation to the talks with the UN General Secretariat on the implementation of the "oil-for-food" formula, expects the third round of talks to be held on 8 April, either to sign an agreement or to resume the talks and sign an agreement at the same time. He told AL-HAYAH that "everything is ready for signing, except three points," two of which are "secondary." [passage omitted]

Al-Anbari described as "good" the atmosphere dominating the talks on the implementation of the oil-for-food formula as stipulated by Resolution 986. He said: "Do not forget that we have finished with 56 clauses, arrived at through full agreement. The remaining three clauses are: First, ways of purchasing and distributing [food] in the three northern governorates. Second, diplomatic privileges and immunity for UN employees. Third, the number of observers in the ports exporting the oil and in Baghdad to inspect the quantities of food, medicines, and sanitary material purchased by the Iraqi Government."

Dr. al-Anbari described the second and third points as "secondary questions which have nothing to do with the basic or political issues." He expressed his confidence that an agreement will be reached on these two points and the first point, "since all the outstanding questions are soluble."

Al-Anbari stressed that the title of the memorandum of understanding, known at this stage as the "no-paper," will remain between brackets until the signing of the memorandum entitled "Memorandum for Implementing Resolution 986." The memorandum contains about 59 clauses concerning details of the pumping of $1 billion worth of Iraqi oil every 90 days for six months and the use of the revenues to meet urgent humanitarian needs in Iraq as stipulated by Resolution 986." [passage omitted]

Iraq: Opposition Sources Claim Saddam 'Hostage' to Udayy

BR1903141596 Madrid EL PAIS in Spanish 16 Mar 96 p 10

[Report by J.C. Gumucio: "Ambition of Saddam's First-Born Son Threatens Bagdad Regime"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Tehran — Iraqi President Saddam Husayn is trying desperately to neutralize fresh threats to his regime, including the uncontrollable and dangerous ambition of his first-born son, Udayy, who, according to various sources, is committed to transform his militia into a private army. Udayy's plan alarmed Saddam, but Saddam wants to prevent a new split within the family.

"Saddam is in a real quandary. If he tries to put an end to his son's ambitions, he could find himself challenged and that would confirm rumors of an unprecedented conflict within the presidential palace. And if he allows Udayy to create a genuine military force in parallel with the regular Army then that will even further irritate the few generals he trusts that remain," said an Iraqi source in exile.

The versions of a dispute between Saddam and his son emerged after a series of reports saying that Udayy recently warned various officials to join the "fedayin de Saddam" militia, a corps of more than 8,000 men created to bolster the presidential guard. As leader of this force, Udayy wields considerable influence among the senior military command, who are currently intimidated and reluctant to contradict Saddam's unpredictable and violent offspring. Two weeks ago, some of Udayy's forces tangled with regular Army troops during a failed assault on the Al-Tagi barracks, north of Bagdad, from which the fedayin wanted to seize some T-72 tanks.

The Iraqi Government denies the existence of fresh divisions within the family, whose vulnerability came to light in August with the flight to Jordan of his two daughters, Raghad and Rana, and their husbands, General Husayn Kamel al-Magid and his brother Saddam al-Magid. Both were killed, together with their father and a brother, two days after returning to Bagdad in February, despite offers of a pardon made by Saddam himself.

Children Liquidated

The campaign to eliminate the Al-Magid is the task of Udayy's fedayin. One version which has even been denied by the opposition, said that Udayy's men even killed the young children of the deserters to "put an end to the succession of traitors." Various women, including

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the sisters of the deserters, are reported to have been killed recently in Bagdad.

The reports by the opposition are contradictory, but they do agree on various aspects. Apparently, the implacable campaign against the Al-Magid clan has not ended. Recent reports received from Bagdad state that the government had sent out various military units to pursue all its members. "Many of those who have tried to flee to the border of a neighboring country have been liquidated during dragnet operations with the support of armed helicopters. It is estimated that more than 100 members of this clan have died during the purge ordered by Saddam and executed by Udayy," said an opposition source.

But the coordination between father and son stops there, say various opposition sources. He is getting out of [Saddam's] control," and the capture of five Republican Guard commanders, including General Husayn Bahri Ibrahim al-Tikriti and Vice Admiral Faysal Husayn Hasan al-Tikriti unleashed virulent protest from senior military officers. The arrested officers were planning to flee "to a neighboring country," presumably Saudi Arabia. Other dissidents have fled to the Mosul region, according to opposition sources. Fearful of contradicting his son and punishing him for his excesses, Saddam is reluctant to intervene in the matter. "Saddam has become a hostage to his own son. Udayy is totally out of control," said a representative of the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, the main Shiite opposition organization headquartered in Tehran. Its leader, the Ayatollah Mohamed Baker al-Hakim, told EL PAIS that Saddam "feels cornered" and that is why he has not appeared on television for more than three weeks, not even to urge the Iraqi people to turn out for the parliamentary elections scheduled for the end of this month.

Iraq: Halabjah Residents Demonstrate Against Regime

LD1703114996 Tehran IRNA in English 1039 GMT 17 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Halabjah, March 17, IRNA — People of the northern Iraqi Kurdish populated town of Halabjah on Saturday in a massive demonstration condemned the 1988 chemical bombardment of the city by the Iraqi forces which left some 5,000 dead and around 10,000 injured.

Leader of the Islamic movement of the Iraqi Kurdistan, Shaykh Usman 'abd-al-'Aziz, addressing the gathering exppressed his appreciation to the Islamic republic of Iran for its generous aid and assistance to the Iraqi Kurdish people, the peopie of Halabja in particular.

On March 16, 1988, Halbja became a victim of the chemical attacks of the Iraqi regime. To commemorate the tragic event, every year special ceremonies are held here.

Meanwhile, leader of the Iraqi Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), Jalal Talebani, Saturday addressing hundreds of thousands of people in Sulaymaniyah, northern Iraq, on the same occasion, called on all Iraqi opposion groups to join efforts to topple the Baghdad regime.

He added that the next move of the Iraqi kurds will be taking control of Karkuk, in northern Iraq, which has the largest oil terminals of Iraq.

Iraq: Forces Reportedly Deployed Between al-'Amarah, al-Basrah

JN1803151996 (Clandestine) Voice of Rebellious Iraq in Arabic 1315 GMT 18 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] As a result of the panic that is gripping the authorities of the tyrant regime in Baghdad following the blows they have received from our people's mujahidin and revolutionaries in the south, our informed sources in al-'Amarah Governorate said that the regime has deployed more forces in the areas between al-'Amarah and al-Basrah Governorates.

These sources said that some of the regime's artillery battalions have taken up new positions between al-Qurnah and Qal'at Salih districts. Other infantry forces were also deployed in the same area after the defeated forces of the tyrant received a violent blow from our zealous fighters late last month.

The forces of the regime's defeated Fourth Army Corps had sustained a severe loss after the triumphant Badr Forces launched a surprise and fierce attack at the end of last month. Reports of the victories of the mujahidin in that attack are still the focus of attention of citizens in Iraqi cities, especially in the southern cities.

Iraq: Sympathetic Oil Firms To Receive Preferential Treatment

JN1803123396 Baghdad INA in English 1135 GMT 18 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Baghdad, March 18, INA— An Iraqi newspaper has said the people of Iraq will not view oil companies as equals when it comes to granting business opportunities since it is illogical to give equal treatment to companies that took positions which respect common legitimate interests and others which showed a negative attitude towards Iraq's national rights and desire to enjoy fair treatment in international dealings.

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In an article, AL-THAWRAH, organ of the Arab Ba'th Socialist Party, said Iraq has the world's largest oil reserves.

Also the production of its wells exceeds that of similar wells of the largest oil producers.

(The low cost of production in comparison with other countries has made big oil companies compete to win oil deals with Iraq), said the paper.

AL-THAWRAH stressed that the Iraqis are aware that oil is a wealth that should serve Iraq's national interest, and this fact is in harmony with Iraq's desire to develop cooperation with states and companies that have a fair and just view of Iraq's desire to live in peace and its right to development and progress.

The paper said a Western radio station recently broadcast a program on Iraq's future oil prospects. Oil experts, writers, media and politicians have agreed that Iraq has a high potential to produce oil and conclude deals with world oil companies.

Iraq: Oil, Gas Crisis in Babil Province Addressed

96LH0125D Baghdad AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic 2 Jan 96 p 4

[Report by Samir 'Abd Mahdi]

[FBIS Translated Text] Babil—The Petroleum and Gas Products Company in Babil Province, in cooperation with the people's councils in the districts, has continued to provide liquid gas and kerosene at official prices and deliver them to the people following the acute crisis they experienced during the past few weeks. The company is using several large trucks, which can carry 420 cylinders each, to provide liquid gas to the residents in Babil, al-Wardiyah, Kurayti'ah, Sayf Sa'd, and al-Hillah. It has also intensified the control over roving retail sellers, who try to sell liquid gas at higher prices. Some gas distribution agents told AL-JUMHURIYAH that there is no shortage in liquid gas and kerosene now. They receive large quantities of these two materials daily and sell them directly to the people at official prices.

Iraq: Gas Production Increase, Industrial Projects Reported

96LH0125A Baghdad AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic 23 Jan 96 p 4

[Report by Hiyam Ahmad]

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad—The General Gas Establishment last year made some important industrial achievements by depending on national expertise and Iraqi management methods, saving large sums of money. Eng. Zuhayr Mustafa Shakir, director general of the General Gas Establishment, told AL-JUMHURIYAH that in 1995 his firm manufactured 8,750 liquid gas cylinders. It also repaired 354,000 gas cylinders, 1,750 air filling heads, 170 manual filling heads, 440,000 liquid gas cylinder valves, and 5,500 low-pressure gas regulators. It also produced 3,250 tons of hexane and 45 tons of bentonite [bintan] materials. He added that the firm made several production line changes in the gas-filling plants to reduce the use of equipment, such as chains and electric motors, and save money. He affirmed that these changes have saved 2 million dinars at the al-Dawrah gas-filling plant and 500,000 dinars at the Ba'trabah gas-filling plant annually.

Iraq: First Time Production of Oil Brand Reported

96LH0124A Baghdad AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic 30 Dec 95 p 4

[Report by Hiyam Ahmad]

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad—The South Petroleum Company has succeeded in producing a petroleum substance which is used in drilling deep oil wells. Company Director General Rafid Muhammad Yasin al-Dabbuni told AL-JUMHURIYAH that this substance is characterized by its ability to resist extreme heat. It is not affected by salt substances and shale rock layers. He explained that the company produced this substance by depending on Iraqi components. He affirmed that tests have proven its good quality and agreement with existing standards.

The company director general said that the production of this petroleum substance will save hard currency and reduce the cost of oil production. He noted that the price of one cubic meter of substance when imported is 400,000 dinars, while producing it locally does not cost more than 6,000 dinars. He added that the company has succeeded in producing anti-emulsification substance used in treating crude oil. The company is producing laboratory glass devices and supplying them to the pertinent establishments. These devices were imported from foreign markets before.

Iraq: Prices Stabilize in Baghdad, Drop in Provinces

96LH0125B Baghdad AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic 22 Jan 96 p 4

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad—AL-JUMHURIYAH has continued to follow up the market activity in some Baghdad areas. Our correspondents have noticed that prices were stable yesterday because of stagnation in market activity in anticipation of a further drop in prices. Merchants tried to dispose of their stored food

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commodities by telling the people that prices were expected to go up in the coming days. Some merchants noted that prices fluctuate up and down during the day, but they could not give a reason for that. Other merchants said that prices depend on offer and demand, particularly during Ramadan, when demand for certain products increases.

Zuhayr 'Abd-al-Ghafur Yunis, chairman of the Baghdad Chamber of Commerce, told AL-JUMHURIYAH: Iraq's positive response to UN Secretary General Dr. Butrus Butrus Ghali's invitation to Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz on 19 January affected the market, as prices began to drop. We expect this drop in prices to continue in the future. He called on the merchants to put their stored goods on the market and maintain a sense of patriotism, particularly during this period. He also called on the people not to hoard food, because this could cause shortages, increase demand, and raise prices.

Sawsan 'Ali al-Jiddah, an economist at the Urban and Regional Planning Center, explained that the oppressive blockade situation does not provide a stable measure to analyze the future trend because the laws and regulations are not stable. She expects prices to drop for some time. Our correspondent in al-Qadisiyah reports that market activity in the province has witnessed a noticeable decline. One kilogram of brown flour reached 400 dinars and white flour 600 dinars. A kilogram of sugar reached 1,150 dinars and local rice 750 dinars. Our correspondent in Babil reports that the prices of basic food stuffs have noticeably dropped. The price of a kilogram of sugar dropped from 1,600 to 1,200 dinars, rice from 1,250 to 1,000 dinars, and vegetable oil from 3,000 to 2,000 dinars. In al-Najaf, the drop in prices has ranged between 15 and 25 percent. The price of a kilogram of flour dropped from 1,500 to 1,000 dinars, rice from 1,800 to 800 dinars, and sugar from 1,700 to 1,000 dinars. The price of oil went down by 700 dinars. Our correspondent in al-Najaf says that the prices of electrical and household goods are continuously falling in the province's markets.

Iraq: Strategic Agricultural Plan Reported

96LH0124B Baghdad AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic 25 Dec 95 p 4

[Report by Yusuf al-Na'ili]

[FBIS Translated Text] Al-Qadisiyah—The Agriculture Ministry has adopted a new plan to develop and increase the production of strategic crops. Agriculture Minister Dr. 'Abd-al-Ilah Hamid Muhammad Salih told the AL-JUMHURIYAH correspondent in the al-Qadisiyah Province that the ministry began to implement these programs to develop the cultivation of shilib [as transliterated] in certain areas of al-Qadisiyah and al-Najaf Provinces last season. This is the first step for transferring the technology from the research centers to the farmers. He added that one method used in this program was drip irrigation [al-rayy al-munqati'] rather than flooding, which affects productivity and increases salinity in the soil. This method also rationalizes the use of water. He noted that these lands will be planted with legume crops—beans for animal feed — this year in three places in the al-Qadisiyah Province and six places in the al-Najaf Province, two weeks before the shilib harvest. The minister affirmed that the areas planted with the animal feed crop last year showed a very high increase in shilib production and the fertility of the land designated for agriculture.

Iraq: Food Prices Said Rising Sharply

96LH0125F Baghdad AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic 14 Jan 96 p 4

[Report by Hiyam Ahmad]

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad—A sharp increase in the price of basic food commodities in the local markets has coincided with the approach of Ramadan. This phenomenon occurs every year. It is due to the high demand for certain food stuffs during Ramadan. Some merchants take advantage of this demand and raise their prices. During a tour of some Baghdad markets, AL-JUMHURIYAH has noticed that the merchants in all these markets have raised their prices. The price of one kilogram of Thai rice ranged between 1,400 and 1,500 dinars, sugar between 1,700 and 1,900 dinars, oil 3,000 dinars, lentils 2,000 dinars, peas 1,000 dinars, and beans 2,700 dinars. The price of one can of tomato paste ranged between 1,850 and 2,000 dinars. Khulud 'Abd-al-Zahrah Khalaf and Amirah Hadi, two homemakers, expressed profound displeasure at the daily increase in food prices, prompting people to stop buying some commodities. They do not think that they are essential anymore, but can one really give up food, including bread, whose price went up to 70 dinars? Jasim Khalaf, a civil servant, said that we must not make Ramadan a burden on the family budget by overspending. We must remember God's words that the extravagant are brothers of Satan. He said we must not allow the merchants to use this time to increase their profits by taking advantage of increased demand for most food commodities. Muhammad al-Rub'i, a religious man from al-Najaf, told AL-JUMHURIYAH that the essence in Ramadan is piety, worship, and good deeds and not lust over food. He called on the fasting people to be patient.

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Iraq: Dairy Products, Prices, Economy Viewed

96LH0079A Baghdad ALIF BA' in Arabic 17 Jan 96 pp 16-19

[Article by Najla' 'Abd-al-Qadir: "Dairy Products Are Circulating"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Without a long introduction, we have determined that "dairy products" is a notable headline for a new problem in the marketplace and our economic lives, whether pertaining to scarcity, rarity, or rapidly escalating costs.

The dairy products issue in all aspects goes beyond just the economy. It is also connected — because they are processed food substances — with the life of the healthy citizen, after the private sector has taken over the profession's secrets and techniques. However, unfortunately, conscience was suspended, in favor of the temptations of profit. Poor quality production is mixed with the use of raw materials that are suitable for many things, but not for human consumption. Consequently, black has been covered up by white!

ALIF BA', striving to get to the truth in all its dimensions, has looked around the Public Dairy Products Organization, and among private sector plants, and has prepared these three reports.

Along with the spread of population to Baghdad's suburbs in recent times has come the rise of many people's markets, in which the demand for food is increasing. The sidewalks have become jammed with vendors, especially vendors of dairy products, which one craves but should not eat. If you were to spend an afternoon in the al-Daurah area, specifically at its large people's market, you would find a "free market" in which to buy "dairy products," which are difficult to obtain through cooperative associations, ration cards, or the central markets. What we found in those markets in all districts is confusing. How do all these quantities of dairy products reach those vendors, so that they can burden the citizen with their prices, that citizen whose tranquility has been shattered by life's problems. I did not just consider al-Daurah at the beginning of the report. On the contrary, dumping dairy products on sidewalks is a fact in most of our populated areas, including the people's markets, which embrace in their midst, "the place of the free merchant."

It is after four in the afternoon. Women come along, each carrying a box, which was used specifically for greens. Inside the box is a quantity of dairy products and cheese, and some packages of butter marked with the label "Abu Gharib Public Dairy Products Organization." The women sit 1.5 meters apart, and display their wares in an attractive arrangement, calculated to draw your eyes.

I stopped with the purchasers and listened to their bitter conversation. One of them said to one of the vendors: How much is this package of cheese?

She replied: 1600 Iraqi dinars [ID].

He responded: What's going on. Do you take hard currency?

She yelled at him: "Bite it," i.e., the money, "you are not a buyer." But the man did not quiet down. He protested against that much money for no more than one-half kilo. He knew that its official price was considerably less.

She then walked toward her colleague and said: "We buy one package so expensive."

The one on the right said: "We must get ID1500. Our profit is only ID100!"

The "spin" between Um Husayn and Um Mahmud was wasted on us, but the man decided to buy the package under protest.

Those women were very nervous in dealing with shoppers. I noted a fourth woman who was relatively calm. I sat near her and engaged her in conversation concerning how all these dairy products were obtained. She claimed that her share was a gift!

She said: "Trust what I say. We got them from inside the organization itself."

How?

She continued: "On my own, I bought the share of the organization's employees. I stood by the main door, and when official office hours were over, the workers come out, carrying their allotment from the organization. I offered them a price, which we agreed on. After that, I take to the road with these goods, which have cost me a great deal."

After listening to our conversation, one of her colleagues adds: "Our colleague cooperated with certain employees to buy amounts not licensed to be brought out. We buy it and sell it for whatever we please. This is business and, surely, profits are permitted."

Another confirms this information, that she buys the state employee's share, after it is distributed through their offices or cooperatives.

I said to her, but this is impossible. They all have families and children. They need this desperately. She listened and said: "But the need for flour, for example, is greater. The money that buys their share is enough

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to keep somebody alive in terms of flour or rice, if we don't mention oil, sugar, or tea!"

One of them swore to God, saying: "I make a profit on each batch of more than ID1000." I sat sorting the things — such and such milk, such and such butter, such and such cheese. It seems like a joke, but in fact it pains me no end.

The Abu Gharib factory's dairy products are not the only ones available on the sidewalk. On the contrary, I found private sector dairy products in more quantity and variety, carrying many brand names from many producers, including some that might have been manufactured in homes or illegal factories. For example, "al-Kiri Cheese" is offered in more shops and on more sidewalks than bags of flour or other goods. Where does all that come from?

Before I left the "free markets," a milk seller caught my eye. He had filled jelly cans and had put them on a wagon made of iron. The vendor would weigh one kilo for you in a small pail at a price of ID350. I found that it was really "milk," but after heating so as to sterilize it, the milk separated into fat over water. What kind of milk is that!

The educated vendor spoke in a cultured way in order to attract buyers.

It was pure natural milk, but it was missing something because manufactured animal feed was scarce. Therefore, it separated like that. Where does he get it?

He answered at once: "It is produced by domestic factories, the ones that cannot manufacture dairy products. They buy the milk from those who are trying to make a profit."

How much do you pay for a kilo?

"I buy it for ID250, i.e., I make a profit of ID100 per kilo."

Consequently, this milk vendor is selling at the official price for a "bottle" of milk produced by the state organization. However, the price of that bottle has now reached ID300. Go figure!

Avoid Suspicious Cargoes

After all that, one should be aware of the truth about private sector producers, so as to learn facts of which many of us are ignorant.

We visited the Ab Dairy Products factory, where our arrival coincided with a crush of people competing at the door selling raw milk, marketing it for the factory. We stopped for a while, watching the crowd.

Everyone was buying milk in differing amounts. Some of them carried small capacity pails, while one "high belly" [fat cat] bought three-fourths of the factory's output for that day. He carried it off in his vehicle, a "half lorry." This confirmed that he was a wholesaler.

I said to myself, bitterly: "Why doesn't this producer take his milk to the Public Dairy Products Organization, to help end the shortage difficulties? This would have been a contribution toward alleviating the starvation cycle from which our citizens suffer."

I did not stop at that. I began to look for the gentleman that heads that marketing process.

I met with Salih Yunis, director of the Ab Dairy Products plant, which has been defunct for a long time, and owner of the al-Ishaqi al-Kabir project. He answered my question, by saying:

"We used to supply Abu Gharib Dairy Products with 17 tons of milk daily from our project in al-Ishaqi. This amount was reduced in recent years to five tons a day, because of insufficient fodder, which the Abu Gharib facility supplied. This forced us to buy our cattle's remaining feed requirements from the black market, whose very exorbitant prices cause us suffering. Moreover, the prices which should defray the cost of producing raw milk were not subsidized. This forced most of us to stop sending our milk products to the Organization, because that was causing us considerable economic harm."

I asked him about the prices that the Organization paid, and how the economic damage occurred.

He said: "The Organization pays ID60, plus 1.5 kilos of fodder, for one liter of milk. This does not totally cover production costs, nor the cost of any food materials that we must buy from the market.

"I will explain to you how this offer from the Organization causes us economic damage. We pay ID150 for a kilo of bran. This is a basic material for feed composition. In addition, a kilo of cotton seed costs ID100. Plus, the remnants from yellow corn and factory wastes cost ID85 per kilo. As for fertile soil, it costs ID100,000 per ton. How much we need! Our expenditures in general average a great deal to feed one cow, which eats six kilograms of concentrated fodder per day."

At the Baghdad Dairy Products Company, known for the excellence of its products, we met with the director, Haydar al-Samawi, who told us:

"The problem of fodder availability is nearly turning into a real catastrophe. We are totally incapable of continuing production. Along with the paucity that the

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Abu Gharib Dairy Products Organization pays us, there is deteriorating quality of feed. It is losing some of the concentrated properties. In addition, there is the problem of the wrappings used in packaging, their deficiencies, and the rise in costs of their manufactured materials. We should have stopped production completely. Don't forget that we used to buy a tin of milk for one dinar. Today it is ID2. As for a pail of milk, its price used to be ID 5; today, it is ID900. How can we continue to produce and work? We used to produce 60 tons a day. Our production now is 1 percent. We have ceased 92 percent of production. The problem lies in the fodder and packaging. The Ministry of Agriculture has participated in ignoring us and not cooperating with us 90 percent of the time. We and we alone are responsible for producing dairy products, and they have nothing to do with it."

Later, we shall shed some light on the relationship of the Public Dairy Products Organization, and report on its points of view. Are there solutions to all these problems?

What Does the Organization Say?

We put some questions to Ahmad Khalid 'Abdallah, the Organization's director general, concerning its support for the state employees' share, especially after cancelling agents' contracts.

He said: "At present, the Organization markets all of its products to state employees, through their specific departments. In view of the scarcity of raw milk, the Organization concentrates its production lines on basic products, which achieves a more beneficial productivity for the greatest number of empl ,ees, especially pasteurized milk and yoghurt. There is the possibility of expanding this, to offer the remaining products, especially in the spring, when quantities of raw milk available to us increase."

I asked: How do you justify the private sector producers' refusal to turn over milk to the Organization, and their accusations against it of insufficient fodder or subsidy payments in exchange for their products?

The director general responded, clarifying the matter: "The Organization gives fodder to milk suppliers equally, in accordance with the principle of fairness. However, the amount of fodder is small, because it is linked with the circumstances of the oppressive economic embargo. Bran, which is a basic component in fodder, is extracted from grain during the flour production process. The amount of bran depends on the quantity of grain supplied to the millers and the percentage of extraction, which is determined centrally in accordance with ration card requirements.

"The entry of dairy products into local markets and sidewalk vendors is a phenomenon that has now expanded behind that!

"The Board's products are presently distributed only to government departments. The displays of them in markets might have as their source the initiatives of certain employees in their various offices selling a part of their share for profit, in order to purchase other goods."

One observation remained that we put to the cooperative associations for state employees. This concerned the reason for distributing the shares on Friday, when official office hours, as well known, are limited. This results in preventing the employee from receiving his designated share. We received no convincing justification from any association. Note:

This Investigation and Prices

Since we prepared, completed, and sent this report to the printer,the prices of dairy products have increased, or rather, have escalated, both those from legal and illegal sources.

Therefore, we wish to alert the reader that the prices mentioned in this report are no longer as they were. We regret not being able to keep up with the price rises.

Journey of Dairy Prices From Factory to Sidewalk and Home

Part Two by Dhakri al-Samara'i

Fatal Cheese

With regard to Iraqi morning foods, we have noted dairy products of local manufacture from fresh milk, or cooked cheese of various types, such as "al-Kiri and Kraft," at cheap, tempting prices. Some are no more than ID600 for one-quarter kilogram and are available at the nearest commercial shop.

When we note that their competing imported products in the same shops are priced at not less than ID3,000 for the same quantity, is the problem in the quality of the import or in the lack of quality of the locally produced? Because the issue of "local" is tied in with the aspect of "cottage" industry, that is homes that work in secret or "under cover of darkness," we can only knock on those closed doors, in an attempt to inquire about specifics and to try to find out what is going on in secret.

At the outset, we went to the largest dairy product manufacturing complexes in Baghdad, and especially to al-Fadiliyah, Abu Gharib, and al-Mahmudiyah districts, and other miscellaneous areas in the capital. We can only say that what we saw there, in terms of how

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dairy products are produced and the raw materials used in them, was so dreadful that it made us — I and my photographer colleague — afraid of everything connected with dairy products located in local markets. We were even afraid to drink their water, despite our great thirst resulting from our extensive tour among those buildings, hidden away from the eyes of the health inspectors.

In one of the populated quarters in the al-Fadiliyah District, the people of the quarter showed us around one of these plants. It was equivalent to a house in a poor quarter, lacking even the barest minimum of sanitary conditions, where the workers were wading about in the midst of a swamp of unpleasant-looking water and mud, seeping from the house's storage tank and drainage system. They walked around inside the walls of a so-called production plant (al-Kiri, Kraft, and al-Qimar cheese).

We met a man who was called "chief of workers" or supervisor of the manufacturing processes. He was no better than his comrades in his clothes or cleanliness. When we asked him about the plant's owner, after telling him that we were new agents, he said: "The owner is not here now. He only visits us at night to pay the workers' wages and to supervise loading the products. They are distributed to the shops with which he deals. He also oversees the process of shipping and unloading the raw materials for the next day's work."

Later, we tried to talk with him about the difficulties of the job and of obtaining raw materials, so that he would — in sympathy with us — lead us to one of the inhabited buildings in al-Fadiliyah, to which this factory sells crumbs of al-Arab cheese. These are leftovers that remain after the sale at a very cheap price, no more than ID25 per kilogram. For the reader's information, we can say that the cooked cheese manufacturing process (al-Kiri and Kraft) is an easy one, because most of the elements within it are available locally. They include local fresh cheese (al-Arab cheese) in addition to salts extracted from milk, and liquid cooked cheese (semi-milk). These mixed materials are treated with heat (cooked) at 85 to 110 degrees Centigrade (over steam and under 10 lbs pressure).

As you can see, this manufacturing process is extremely easy and does not require complex manufacturing equipment. However, the process' danger lies in the suitability of raw materials and the extent of sanitary conditions in all the production stages, in order to ensure the safety of the consumer's health.

What we saw during our tour among a number of buildings and houses, which are charged with doing this kind of healthful industry, of which we have mentioned examples, certainly calls for a minimum of industrial sanitary principles and conditions.

We found a building in Abu Gharib where this manufacturing process was being done outdoors in the garden. They were working directly on the ground, after spreading out sacks, upon which they put the fresh cheese. Moreover, the utensils used in the process were rusty and old. But the workers did not follow any sanitary procedures, as regulations require with regard to those who work in the food processing industry.

The worst of this is that it shows up in the raw materials, most especially in the crumbs of Arab cheese, from which emanate the odors of decay and putrefaction. The difference is in the salts used in the industry. In one of the clandestine places in the al-Ghazaliyah District in Baghdad, we saw the plant owner use phosphate fertilizer and phosphate salts, instead of the expensive and imported pure milk salts. Since we witnessed many bags of fertilizer from which the workers were scooping up fertilizer to put into the pot of cheese, we therefore know that we are being fed chemical fertilizer. This is the truth, despite its bitter taste!

Fatal Cheese

When we thus label this food that the citizen buys from the local markets, he should be certain that he is not being deceived by their producers, in terms of cheap prices compared with imported cheeses, whose contents may also be dubious, but which carry exorbitant prices. These could go as high or more than ID3,000 for one package. By this, we do not mean the products of our health-certified factories which, very unfortunately, do not exceed three or four in number. They are the Public Dairy Products Organization, Al-Shahla' Dairy Products, Euphrates Dairy Products Factory, and the Bariyah Dairy Products plants. However, what we did mean is that those with sick souls, and those who want to profit quickly at the expense of the citizen's health and safety, have earned the title "murderers," when they cause premeditated death — through innocent cheese! This is by using deadly materials to manufacture cheese, especially the industrial salts that they use instead of milk salts.

As health control authorities told us, and from our examination of certain laboratory test samples, the purity percentage is 94 percent or less at times. The remaining percentage of 6 percent was adulterations, like lead, copper, uranium, tin, and iron. All of these, as you know, are chemical components, which the human body cannot easily get rid of. They settle in the body, which leads to a number of diseases, including liver distension, gallbladder and kidney stones, or joint

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and bone diseases. Moreover, the danger of uranium contamination is that the accumulation of deposits in the human body results in affecting sexual abilities (male and female) and to sterility.

Health Control...Where?

We have seen a number of "covert" dairy products manufacturing buildings in various areas of Baghdad and nearby districts (al-Fadiliyah, al-Mahmudiyah, Abu Gharib, etc.), where the violations were similar in terms of production procedures or in the raw materials used. However, the overt spread of the products of these clandestine factories is such that there may not be any store or house in any alley that does not sell fresh milk or Qimar or cooked cheese produced in these factories, under the eyes of all the control authorities. So, where are the health inspectors, and what measures have been taken to stop the spread of these factories and deadly products?

The Health Control Branch of the Baghdad Health Department responded to us through its director, Hazim al-Nasiri!

"Citizens buying products like these might be motivated by the price differential. Prices of the products of these factories for al-Kiri and Kraft cheese are no more than ID1,00 to 3,000, while the prices of health-certified factory products are up to ID20,000 per kilo for cooked cheese."

Regarding the branch's role in combatting this situation, al-Nasiri said: "Our inspection teams have seized these products to learn about them. Samples and laboratory specimens have been sent to the Institute of Food Research. Upon confirming their unsuitability for human consumption, they are destroyed. Attempts are then made to find the places and buildings where the dairy products were clandestinely manufactured, either by means of teams touring places like them, or through citizens' reports, so that, later, we can begin our initiatives to obtain the basic official authorizations. We do that by approaching the local police to obtain judicial inspection authorization to investigate the building in which the processing is done. We also obtain a similar authorization for the sanitary inspection team from the People's Council or the district mayor. Then the clandestine factory (building or shop) is closed down and the building's owner turned over to the court concerned. These factories that are not certified health-wise are in violation of the Public Health Law of 1981. Article 89 of that law stipulates that "it is illegal to establish or open any public shop, either under the Socialist, mixed, or private sector, except after obtaining a health certificate, from the health authority concerned."

The director of the health control branch, confirming ALIF-BA's information that it gained through its inspection tours of clandestine dairy product manufacturing places, said: "Those buildings had in fact the least sanitary production and environmental conditions, since dairy product factories are not licensed to be established in population centers and commercial areas in the Baghdad municipality. This is because these factories require large amounts of water for their production, washing, and water drainage processes. In addition, disagreeable odors emanate from the processing of these materials. The production processes also require laboratories inside the factories for product control, and specialists in the production of dairy products, including chemists, and agricultural engineers from the department of food industries or veterinarians. There should not be, as there was in the clandestine factories, workers working in the middle of swamps of dirty water, as our teams discovered. They were not licensed. Consequently, their health and the extent of their being free of contagious and infectious diseases was dubious."

What about the raw materials used in the clandestine factories?

He replied: "All test results for the specimens of these products, which were sent to the Food Institute's laboratories, and to the Central Agency for Quality Standards and Control, proved the products to be unsuitable for human consumption. The fresh cheese (Arab cheese) is from the residue of spoiled cheese (contaminated and deteriorated). Moreover, the salts and added emulsions were of unknown origin, and the percentage of product purity was less than allowed health limits. The nature of the impurities in the products was also unknown. Consequently, these materials were unfit for human consumption, because those impurities could cause quick-acting health damage (food poisoning), or their effects could be felt after many years."

Later, we asked Dr. Hazim al-Nasiri to read some examples of laboratory tests concerning clandestine dairy product factories: "The pots and utensils were dirty and rusted."

"The dairy products used in the manufacturing process were contaminated and unfit for human consumption. They contained colon feces bacteria and other bacteria requiring further testing."

The Food Institute's tests of dairy product samples from an unlicensed factory indicated the growth of cheese fungi that produce toxins. These are poisons that are unaffected by heat, even if the basic germs were dead, i.e., the cheese remains contaminated with poison even if cooked.

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This concerns products that are exposed to direct air, since the product must be completely vacuum wrapped.

ALIF BA' also read the degree of material purity in these samples. The purity of bicarbonate of soda was 96 percent. It was presumed that the purity of citric acid would be no less than 99 percent, but its purity percentage was less than 95 percent. The presumption was that it would reach 99.5 percent.

As regards actions by the Health Control Branch against the owners of these places, decisions were made to close them and refer the owners to the competent courts, so that justice may deal with their cases by virtue of their health crimes against the citizens. When purchasing dairy products, the Branch advises the need to read the commercial label on the package and ascertain the facts about production and suitability. You should also obtain a purchase receipt from the shop owner for unpackaged products, "because the clandestine factories do not write receipts for their agents." It is also important to make sure the wrapping is airtight, especially for dairy products, since the covert factories lack the means to do this kind of packaging. We must all not forget the need to inform Health Control about these killer factories and their deadly products. Don't let them deceive you!

Iraq: Farms in Karbala Visited

96LH0080A Baghdad ALIF BA' in Arabic 20 Dec 96 pp 16-17

[Article by 'Imad Kazim Sabbar With photographs by Tha'ir al-Janabi: "Are Karbala's Farms Threatened With Inundation?"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The agricultural sector is the most important sector in the Governorate of Karbala', with 32 percent of the population. The governorate is famous for its major crops such as wheat, barley, yellow corn, and vegetables, as well its palm groves, with a total of nearly 2 million productive palm trees. Hence the governorate is the number two date producer after Babil. It also has various fruit trees. The land is irrigated primarily from the Bani-Hasan and Hasaniyah canals, which branch off from the fore of the al-Hindiyyah Dam on the Euphrates River.

For some time, the governorate has suffered from the rise in groundwater levels, which gets worse every year. This problem is treated with temporary solutions because of the criminal embargo imposed on our valiant people. The rise in these water levels has caused the inundation of vast agricultural expanses, estimated in the hundreds of thousands of dunums of date and fruit groves. That is not all. This water gets into the farmers' houses, forcing them to abandon their homes in many parts of the governorate, among them the village of Sayyid Isma'il, al-Baziliyah, al-Hifaz, al-Husayniyah, al-Shabanat, al-Wand, and the village of Abu-Humir and Layih. The waters reached the outskirts of the city of Karbala' and turned the agricultural land of its orchards into vast marshes, becoming a resting stop for water birds and a fishing center until it reached the point of fisherman fighting over the expanses of water.

ALIF BA' sampled the atmosphere of this problem, and we offer you here what we saw and heard during our tour—unedited.

First Stop

Our first stop was the region of Sayyid Isma'il al-Baziliyah. We made our way over a dirt dam and were welcomed by farmer 'Ali Dasham 'Alwan in his reception room which, only a short time before, had been immersed in water among the scattered furniture and the briny smell. His house was surrounded by water on all sides.

"I have lived here for 16 years," he said. "I have 20 dunums of land and over this last period my land and the land adjacent to it has been submerged ruining my yellow corn and fruit tree crops.

"Have you consulted the competent authorities?"

"I knocked on every door but in vain. They made me run around in a vicious circle from one governorate office to another. The last one was the Ministry of Irrigation."

"How bad was the damage?"

"My damage cannot be measured, plus there was harm done to my family, who is now homeless. We were not the only ones hurt. Hundreds of families and huge amounts of land were affected. The closed-in area between the Karbala'-Babil Road and the Karbala'-al-Najaf Road was under water, and the shrine of Sayyid Isma'il was totally submerged.

What Was the Reason?

We asked what were the causes of what happened.

Farmer Ghalib Kazim Jayyad al-Da'mi told us:

"The reason this land was submerged was because so many pumps broke down and were out of service for a long time, along with the cultivation of the rice crop over wide areas. Also, the river gates were left open — originally these had not been there — because of neglect and lack of maintenance. This led to a constant outflow of water over a period of months from the canals of Bani Hasan to the drainage ditch. In other words, I can tell you it was just lack of supervision."

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One Community's Disasters and Another's Benefits

Our second stop was the area of al-Hifaz, and there we spoke to farmer Mahdi Karim 'Abdallah, 57. When he found out what our mission was, he took a deep breath, then sighed, and said: "Ours is a big problem, and the loss we have suffered is also great. I own 13 dunums. I plant wheat, barley, and yellow corn, in addition to fruit trees. Those dead trees are the proof of what I'm saying.

"As you can see, my land has been turned into a lake in which a few house plants and papyrus plants are growing, surrounded by water on all sides."

Fish and the People of al-Nasiriyah

[Sabbar] Where did this water come from?

['Abdallah] We have lived here for generations, but we've never seen water like this. However, when families from al-Nasiriyah came to us wanting to fish, the water gradually rose higher until all the land was submerged, as you can see.

His wife, Haja Hadiyyah Kazim, completely shares his view, saying: "There is an agreement among the fishermen and the people who work on the water drainage pumps.

(Jokingly, I asked him) Why don't you take up fishing instead of farming?

['Abdallah] What I do is farming and that's all I know how to do. They would not agree to sell fish to us, even if we gave them a price higher than the market price.

[Sabbar] Why?

['Abdallah] I don't know.

Farmer 'Abd-al-Wahid Muhammad assured us that all of his land (more than 15 dunums) was flooded with water and destroyed 3,000 orange trees and 5,00 palm trees. He was forced to sell all of his animals after having had 15 cattle. Today, he has begun gradually to sell off his household furniture in order to help keep his 21-member family alive.

In the orchard of farmer Manhal 'Aziz 'Umran, among the dead trees, he told us, "I've quit farming. Now I work as a day laborer to make a living."

Our tour included the pumping stations. We visited the premises of these stations more than once in order to be well informed about what was going on in those stations.

Amid the roar of the pumps, we met assistant foreman 'Imad Rashid Hasan, who has worked in this station for more than two years.

"This station moves water from the al-Hasaniyah drainage ditch to the Euphrates River," he told us. "We have 10 pumps, seven of which are on the al-Hasaniyah drainage ditch and three on the Abu-Safan drainage ditch."

"Three of the seven pumps are on the al-Hasaniyah drainage ditch? Why?"

"One of them is not operating."

"And the second?"

"It's out of order."

"And the third?"

"Out of order."

"What put it out of order?"

"A missile!"

"And the fourth?"

"It works if you hit the ignition switch."

"Why are there three inoperative pumps on the Abu-Safan drainage ditch? What are the reasons?"

"The first one took in some air and needs time for me to operate it. The other one is not out of order; it just has some electrical deficiencies. It has not been working for a month. The third one has been out of order for two weeks."

"What are the problems you have to deal with in this station?"

"We lack the necessary means for comfort. In summer, for example, there is no air conditioning, and there's no heat in winter. Also, it is difficult to reach the station to increase the transport rates."

There we also met Eng. 'Abd-al-Amir Hashim Suwayf, who supervises this station. He told us the farmland had been inundated because of openings in the piers of the drains, in addition to the infractions of farmers who leave the irrigation gates constantly open. When this happens, the pumps are useless because the outflow of water is greater than the water drawn in by the pumps."

"And?"

"Insufficient supervision by the Directorate of Irrigation in the governorate."

After that, the car took us to the Karbala' drainage ditches improvement project. On the road, I recalled the project's opening in 1994 — that is, a year ago — and the people of Karbala' were delighted by the statement of Director of Irrigation Eng. Majid Khalil

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Salman al-Zubaydi, to ALIF BA' before the opening. The following paragraph appeared:

"The services of this project, when it is completed, will offer an improvement in agricultural land and increase arable land; it will serve nearly 90,000 dunums and the center of the city of Karbala'; and it will reduce groundwater levels. Its drainage capacity is 10 cubic meters per second."

What happened after the opening? Instead of improving 90,000 dunums, it has submerged that area — and the city — many times.

When we arrived at the project site, we found three pumps operating and one worker named Fu'ad Kazim Husayn.

[Sabbar] What does the project consist of?

[Husayn] Five electric pumps and five diesel pumps. Three of the diesels are out of order and two are off because there's no energy.

[Sabbar] What time is it now?

[Husayn] It's 1230.

[Sabbar] After all this time, the shipment still is not complete?

[Husayn] It is complete, but when I tried to turn it on, it didn't work.

[Sabbar] Why?

[Husayn] I don't know why, but I sent for the mechanic to check it for the cause.

[Sabbar] Where is the mechanic?

[Husayn] At home because he's military.

Three days after our first tour, we made a second inspection tour of the pumping stations. We found that all the pumping stations for the improvement of Karabala's drainage ditches were off (five of them electric and five of them diesel). When my colleague, the photographer, tried to take a picture so that we could confirm what we saw, a young man in a *dishdashah* [ankle-length Arab shirt] and carrying worry beads, and whose cologne could be scented from yards away, prevented him.

I asked him, "What business is this of yours?"

He said, "I am the worker at this station. My name is Sami Wahid Majd."

"Fine. Why are all the pumps off?"

"Because the electrical current was cut off 15 minutes ago."

When we went over to the switch, it became clear to us that the electrical current was working-it was not cut off.

As to the second remark which had interested us and the farmers who were with us, it was that the openings of the pumps were completely dry, so dry that the mud sediment in the dry pipe opening was also dry. This means it had been off for some time — certainly not just 15 minutes!

The sight of that inclined us to catch a scent of the agreement the farmers had spoken of so frankly.

The station's drainage capacity is 10 cubic meters per second. A little simple math tells us: 10 x 60 sec. = 600 m2 per minute; 600 m2 per minute x 60 minute = 36,000 m2 per hour.

That means the station's idleness for an hour had accumulated about 36,000 cubic meters of water. How could the adjacent farms *not* be submerged with the pumps constantly off?

The Final Stop

Our final stop was the office of Director of Irrigation Eng. Majid Khalil Salman al-Zubaydi.

"How do you explain the flooding of thousands of dunums of farmland and orchards?" we asked him. "Karbala has a decreasing amount of agricultural land, with the average increase in the level of farmland and orchards ranging from 26-27 meters above sea level, with the level of neighboring, surrounding lands in the governorate ranging from 22-23 meters above sea level. That's one thing.

"The other thing is that the cultivation of rice in the highlands in the district of al-Hindiya and in large areas led to the drainage of the rice water into the city of Karbala' because it is located in a depression. The drainage and pumping stations were not designed on the basis of the cultivation of all the agricultural land, such as the land under rice cultivation. So the percentage of cultivation is limited from 10-15 percent in summer and from 50-60 percent in winter of the whole area of farmland. The farmers, however, plant the whole area, which leads to water being wasted into the drainage ditches. These quantities are much greater than the capacity of the pumps, and that in turn leads to the spillage of drainage water onto the farmland.

[Sabbar] Is that the only cause?

[Al-Zubaydi] The heavy water channels, rainwater channels, and civil use channels from all the residential districts all empty into the drainage ditches, and that means

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a large addition to the drainage water because the stations were not designed for that.

[Sabbar] What are your solutions for saving Karbala' from inundation?

[Al-Zubaydi] The Ministry of Irrigation is trying to obtain special pumps as an addition to the al-Razazah pumping station, and all the necessary agreements with foreign sources have been concluded. We are waiting for the consent of the regional committee.

On another front, we got approval to establish and install a new pump in the al-Razazah pumping station in 1996 with a drainage capacity of 6.5 cubic meters per second. It will reduce the quantity of water flowing into the drainage ditch and channeling the Jarf al-Sakhr water into the Euphrates River, after the Jarf al-Sakhr station is on line.

[Sabbar] The process of rice irrigation was recently completed. Is the land now dry?

[Al-Zubaydi] That is not possible because the quantity of accumulated water is very great. No less than 45 days are needed for it to be drained, without furnishing any water from the al-Hasaniyah and Bani-Hasan channels. However, winter cultivation requires furnishing the channels with water, but the dropping water level will continue during that period.

[Sabbar] During our tour of the pumping station, we saw no electrical generators. Why?

[Al-Zubaydi] They are used only when the current goes off for a short time. The shutting down process requires a whole hour to restart operations. Imagine how much water can accumulate during that hour.

[Sabbar] It is said there is no supervision.

[Al-Zubaydi] There has been supervision during the last four months, and 582 violators were tried and fined from 1,000 to 50,000 dinars, with the correction of the violation. The surface area of the cultivated area and failure of the farmers to cooperate with the authorities in this regard led to violations which were hard to identify unless there was an informant or a dispute among the farmers. Some of the violations go on for more than two years without the knowledge of the office if they are in remote agricultural areas.

[Sabbar] There are openings in the piers of the drainage ditches which cause the flooding of adjacent land. What measures can be taken?

[Al-Zubaydi] Some farmers and brick manufacturers are going to raise the piers during the lowering of the water levels, as they are higher than the normal ground, and our men will call the violators to be responsible.

[Sabbar] People speak of collusion between the fisherman and those supervising the pumps. What do you say?

[Al-Zubaydi] For one thing, that is a rumor. We found that out, and when we looked into it, we found there was no truth to it.

[Sabbar] During the tour we noticed stations inoperative for more than two weeks. Why were repairs delayed?

[Al-Zubaydi] These problems were because of the scarcity of reserve resources. As to their remaining inoperative that long, as you indicate, we have no knowledge of that.

[Sabbar] Is it possible to link the al-Mushawrab and al-Masabb drainage ditches and do away with the pumps?

[Al-Zubaydi] It isn't, because of the difference in the water levels. The al-Masabb drainage ditch is a carrier whose piers were built over the surface of the adjacent farmland. Its level is four meters higher than the al-Mushawrab drainage ditch.

[Sabbar] So what is the solution?

[Al-Zubaydi] A halt to the cultivation of rice, and a reliance on the cultivation of wheat and barley and other strategic crops instead. If rice is planted next season, Karbala' will be totally inundated.

We offer this view to the relevant authorities responsible for finding a solution. We, and the farmers, are waiting.

Iraq: Alternative Animal Feed Production Discussed

96LH0124D Baghdad AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic 25 Dec 95 p 4

[Report by Rawiyah Hashim]

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad—Agricultural experts yesterday discussed animal feed alternatives and their importance to animal resources. The discussion took place during a seminar held by the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development, in cooperation with the Iraqi Atomic Energy Organization. Participants in the three-day seminar, which is being held at the Scientific Research Council, will discuss a number of studies. They include a study about the effects of the blockade on the animal resources sector and a study about improving the production of poultry meat and eggs. Other studies will discuss what is meant by animal feed alternatives, the use of bad quality fodder to feed milk cows, improving the food value of bad quality animal feeds and using them as fodder for ruminants, using fodder cubes to feed ruminants, and using fermentation technology to produce protein concentrates.

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Dr. 'Abd-al-Halim Ibrahim, deputy director of the Iraqi Atomic Energy Organization, delivered a speech in which he said that the Arab world possesses large animal resources. Nevertheless, the production of milk, eggs, and red and white meat does not meet the demand. Studies show that the most important reason is the unavailability of production materials, including concentrated animal feeds.

He noted that the price of raw materials used in the production of animal feed has increased. The cost of animal feed is about 90 percent of the cost of animal breeding. He said that studies conducted by the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development show that there is no shortage in feed plants in the Arab world. The shortage is in the raw materials used in production. He said that the fodder alternatives produced in Iraq only meet about 10 percent of its total needs of fodder materials. Iraq imported more than 1 million tons of animal feed in 1988, which included corn, soy beans, and animal protein. However, the oppressive blockade has exposed the animal resources in the country to grave losses, because the importation of the necessary production materials has stopped.

Iraq: Commercial, Residential Construction Reported

96LH0125E Baghdad AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic 16 Jan 96 p 4

[Report by Sa'di al-Sab']

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad—The Baghdad municipality has designated different areas in Baghdad for the construction of residential and commercial complexes. 'Abd-al-Qadir Muhammad, secretary of the director general of the Baghdad municipality's Town Planning Department, said that the property, in important areas of Baghdad, will be leased to the people according to certain regulations and controls. The construction will be in harmony with the basic plans of the city. He noted that these projects will enable the municipality to provide better service to the people and increase its revenue.

Iraq: Telephone, Postal Communications Reconstructed

96LH0125C Baghdad AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic 21 Jan 96 p 4

[Report by Bushra al-Hamadani]

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad—All postal and communications installations in Baghdad and the provinces were destroyed during the 30-nation treacherous aggression. The objective was to paralyze communications between the Iraqi cities and break contact between the Iraqi people, who were the primary target of the aggression. Nine telephone exchanges were destroyed in Baghdad alone. They were the al-'Ulwiyah exchange, the Bab al-Mu'azzam exchange, the al-Rashidiyah exchange, the al-Salihiyah exchange, the government exchange, the 14 July exchange, the al-A'zamiyah exchange, and al-Jadiriyah exchange. This is besides the al-Rashid and al-Ma'mun communications centers, the Nasr Satellite Communications Station (Arabsat), al-Dujayl Station, and the Baghdad central post office and its projects unit and communications institute. Nine telephone exchanges in the provinces were destroyed and 26 others suffered 30 to 70 percent damage. This is besides the Ninawa television station, the national microwave station in Mosul, the communications centers of Mosul, al-'Amarah, al-Qadisiyah, Irbil, al-Falujah, and Tikrit. The microwave stations in al-Ramadi, al-Falujah, Tikrit, Irbil, al-Samawah, al-Hillah, and al-Nasiriyah were also destroyed.

During their counter offensive against all the effects of the aggression, the construction mujahedin repaired most of what the aggressors had destroyed, depending on their own resources and completing the work within short periods. Regarding the telephone exchanges, the workers repaired, reinstalled, and put back into operation 18 exchanges with a capacity of 308,000 lines in Baghdad. They repaired, modernized, and installed 112 exchanges with a capacity of 343,000 telephone lines in the other provinces. The al-Rashid and al-Ma'mun communications buildings were reconstructed and the communication systems were put back into operation. The construction mujahedin also built a new 150m communications tower for the al-Ma'mun center, replacing the destroyed 117m tower. They also reconstructed the buildings and towers of the communications complexes in al-'Ulwiyah — al-A'zamiyah and Bab al-Mu'azzam — and al-Salihiyah. They reconstructed the buildings and post offices in al-Hillah, al-Samawah, al-Diwaniyah, al-Basrah, al-'Amarah, Tikrit, al-Kut, al-Nasiriyah, al-Falujah, and Mosul. Construction mujahedin also rebuilt 63 stations, complexes, or postal offices in all parts of the country. They also repaired and reinstalled 162 communication centers and 134 towers. Digital communication equipment was also installed and put into operation between the provinces of Baghdad, Babil, al-Qadisiyah, al-Najaf, Karbala', Ninawa, Diyala, Salah al-Din, and the their districts. Technicians and engineers in the General Communications Establishment repaired the ground station in al-Lutayfiyah with a capacity of 128 telephone channels and two television channels, and the ground station in al-Dujayl. They reconstructed the Atlantic antenna in al-Dujayl, which has a diameter of 32.5 meters [as published], and opened six centers in it. They also repaired the destroyed telex equipment in the Nasr Satellite Communications Station.

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Iraq: Provincial Construction Projects Reported

96LH0124F Baghdad AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic 11 Dec 95 p 4

[Report by Zamil Ghannam]

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad—The Housing and Reconstruction Ministry has completed many projects involving housing, services, road maintenance, and bridges in various Iraqi provinces. Talal Husayn Muhammad, director of the al-Anfal Company, told AL-JUMHURIYAH that during the past few months, the company signed contracts to carry out 29 projects involving roads, bridges, and irrigation at a cost of more than 459 million dinars. He said that the company is currently undertaking projects worth 130 million dinars. The company has been asked to carry out three new projects in the coming year at a cost of more than 167 million dinars. It has shared in the implementation of eight irrigation projects, including developing and improving the Euphrates River, and 11 other projects at a cost of 40 billion dinars. These projects included the building of an agricultural bridge in the al-Shu'lah area and maintaining the floating bridges of Arban and al-Laws on the Euphrates River and the Tikrit, al-Sindiyah, Makhul, and al-Huwayjah bridges. The company also maintained the Tikrit-Kirkuk, al-Maymunah-Sayyid Ahmad al-Rifa'i, and al-Mashrah-Jisr Hittin roads. This is besides surfacing the yards of the al-Sa'diyah Gas Plant.

Muhammad said that the projects currently being implemented include the Badrah-Qazaniyah road and highway No. 8, surfacing the roads and yards in the Antibiotics Project, which is being implemented by the ministry's al-Mansur Company, and building new bridges in al-Anbar and Ninawa. He said that the percentage of completed jobs from the beginning of December 1994 until the end of last month was 100 percent. The total volume of the company's commitments—that is, the cost of the projects under implementation and the cost of contracted projects, which we have not begun to implement—is more than 147 million dinars. The cost of the remaining company contracts is more than 124 million dinars.

Iraq: Trade Ministry Sells Products at Low Prices

96LH0124C Baghdad AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic 17 Dec 95 p 4

[Report by Anwar Fakhri]

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad—In implementation of President Leader Saddam Husayn's instructions — may God protect him — and based on the Council of Ministers' decision on 2 December, the Trade Ministry yesterday morning began selling large quantities of its stored commodities to the people at prices 10 percent lower than market prices. The goods were being sold at the Baghdad International Fair, the central markets, and the cooperative societies in Baghdad and the provinces. Trade Minister Dr. Muhammad Mahdi Salih told AL-JUMHURIYAH that the Trade Ministry began selling various goods and products to the people directly. These include construction, health, and electrical equipment, car spare parts, carpets, and hand tools. The ministry is also selling rice, vegetable oil, and tea at competitive prices. He said that only imported goods will be sold at reduced prices. Local products and goods will be sold following coordination between the Industry and the Trade Ministries.

The trade minister explained that the purpose of this operation is to check the rise in prices and absorb part of the excess currency liquidity in the market, which is being used for speculative purposes and increasing prices. He called on the citizens who wish to buy goods for more than 100,000 dinars to get a bank note from the al-Harithiyah and al-Mansur Banks, near the Baghdad International Fair, and the al-Rashid and al-Rafidayn Bank branches in the fair.

Iraq: Minister of Transport Interviewed

96LH0085A Baghdad ALIF BA' in Arabic 6 Dec 95 pp 20-21

[Interview With Dr. Ahmad Murtada Ahmad, Minister of Transport and Communications, by Dhikrayat Muhammad Hasan; place and date not given; first paragraph Alif BA' introduction: "ALIF BA' Presents Train and Telephone Concerns, Road Troubles to Minister of Transport and Communications"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Transport, telephones, and railroads are diverse aspects of one issue connected with people's movement and with securing people's communication and transportation. Perhaps this issue is one of the hottest living issues. There is a constant crisis in transportation means and constant breakdowns in the means of telephone communication, and there are troubles that pursue train passengers. ALIF BA' has conveyed these living concerns from the ordinary citizen to Dr. Ahmad Murtada Ahmad, the minister of transport and communications, who traveled with us in the field and spoke with an extremely clear and explicit language.

Our Lines Are In Everybody's Service

[Hasan] Mr. Minister, with the start of every new school year, the transport crisis intensifies. We wonder: What are the ministry's plans to deal with this matter?

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[Ahmad] We have not waited for the start of the school year to deal with the condition. The ministry started to take steps earlier by repairing numerous buses and restoring them to the service; by organizing their trip routes; by establishing strict trip schedules for them; and by curtailing the irresponsible actions of some bus drivers, plus a number of other measures. Because instructors and students need to reach their colleges and schools on time, we started as of 1 October 1995, i.e. the beginning of the school year, operating 36 express routes from Baghdad's various districts to universities, institutes and colleges. These routes will remain in operation until the end of the school year. The Private Transport Authority also contributed seriously to alleviating the transport difficulty and the great bottlenecks that occurred previously because of the lack of control over trip routes and of failure to unify fares.

[Hasan] Mr. Minister, what steps have you taken to curtail violations committed by private transport drivers?

[Ahmad] Numerous means and deterrent measures have been taken to curtail such violations. All supervision, control, and regulation junctures have actually proceeded to implement paragraph 10 of the esteemed Revolution Command Council decree which empowers the authority's director general to fine a contravening driver 500 dinars [D] for the first violation and D1,000 for the second one. If the violations recurs a third time, the minister is empowered to detain the driver and impound the vehicle for one month.

[Hasan] Have the violations, which are many, been recorded and has the decree been actually implemented?

[Ahmad] Yes, the decree has been implemented against violators, and the "computer" has been used to record these violations so no violations will be "lost." We should note here the role of the Private Transport Authority detachments that are deployed in all "garages" to check all violations.

[Hasan] What are the controls adopted by the ministry to deal with fares, or the transport pricing issue?

[Ahmad] To begin, I would like to point out that the Public Passenger Transport Organization has introduced the monthly ticket system. This ticket costs D25 and the citizen can use it for a whole month and for an unlimited number of times. One should keep in mind that the fare set officially for bus fares is one dinar [per trip] so as to assist citizens and alleviate their burdens. Meanwhile, private transport fares are 7 - 10 percent higher. This has been established as a result of a study conducted by the Public Authority for Private Transport Management. We should keep in mind that these fares are not permanent, considering that a specialized council comprised of representatives of the Interior Ministry, Baghdad Municipality, the General Transport Union, and the Ministry of Transport and Communications conducts a study to balance the fare paid by the citizen with the driver's needs, considering that the driver is also a citizen. This study is reviewed periodically to ensure fairness and to establish the rights of both sides firmly.

[Hasan] In case a citizen observes a violation, where can he report it and how are citizens' complaints dealt with?

[Ahmad] (Here the minister, as a citizen, answered practically, directly dialing a number of phones designated to receive citizens' complaints.) We persistently urge the citizens to stay in constant contact with us to report any violation to the following phone lines: 7726810 and 7726501, which I answer personally; and 7748758, which is the ministry's complaint line. We also have the passenger transport complaint lines, namely 4253296 and 8869005, which are at the organization director's office; and 8845012, 8850979, and 8845007 at the Private Transport Authority to receive the citizens' complaints. I do not believe that we have failed to respond to anybody who has contacted us. We deal with every report with extreme concern and attention.

Increased Bus Fleet

[Hasan] Do you plan to perpetuate and develop the process of transporting civil service employees and to strengthen this process with additional routes?

[Ahmad] The organization is inclined to balance the number of buses allocated for official agencies and of those allocated to transport citizens. Regular transport routes will be reinforced in the few coming days, especially since drivers have been secured through the leader's appeal campaign. This will contribute to providing broader services to the citizens generally, including civil servants. One should keep in mind that 122 routes are in operation in Baghdad currently. The Public Passenger Transport Organization has increased passenger transportation in Baghdad this year. Whereas ridership in September 1993 and September 1994 was 5.9 million and 10.8 million passengers consecutively, it rose to 24.6 million in September 1995. Average monthly ridership in Baghdad has been increasing steadily. Through August, this ridership amounted to nearly 20 million passengers monthly, and it is expected to grow to 25 million passengers monthly during the remaining part of this year.

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Railroads...Problems Seeking Solution

[Hasan] The Public Railroads Authority merits a long pause. There is more than one topic to discuss. First, let us try to find out the volume of these services and the reason for the increasing demand for this means?

[Ahmad] The fact is that despite all the accusing fingers pointing at this organization, it performs an influential role in passenger transportation. This is evident from the growing demand for train travel. This demand exceeds the absorption capacity of the available coaches as a whole and the absorption capacity of each coach separately. The reason is low fares. The fare is a D40 for a Baghdad-al-Basrah return ticket. Armed forces members get a 50 percent discount, meaning that the fare costs them only D20. A simple comparison with private sector cars, which charge up to D500, and passenger buses, up to D300, makes evident why this enormous mass of people, which amount to nearly five million passengers annually, travel by train.

[Hasan] How can the transportation of five million passengers be reconciled with the number of trains available currently?

[Ahmad] This question takes us back to 1985 when we had six trains whereas we have now 38 passenger trains and 31 cargo trains. The absorption capacity of 38 trains is five million passengers annually, keeping in mind that the trains we have are 14 - 28 years old.

[Hasan] Incredible difficulties are encountered in travel by train, beginning with irregular departure and arrival schedules and the breakdowns trains experience and ending with the lack of services which the passenger needs. Are there current or future plans to deal with this condition?

[Ahmad] The low cost we have talked about is not at all comparable with the cost shouldered by the Railroad Organization to operate and maintain trains. Moreover, the vandalism and theft of coach contents has played a major role in destroying the operational structure of these trains. It is painful to see that some people steal water coolers and light bulbs; break drinking water taps; pull out window frames or smash window panes, each of which D72,000. Many of these panes are smashed daily when trains travel through certain parts of Baghdad, such as al-Dwarah and al-Mahmudiyah, or when the trains are on their way to stations outside Baghdad. Children hurl rocks at trains, smashing their windows in a way that makes the heart bleed. For example, 22 glass panes were smashed during the Babil Festival. Train passengers have their own way of sabotage. In addition to vandalizing coach contents, one finds that some passengers are not even concerned with their own life and that they climb atop trains and go to sleep there. Numerous regrettable accidents have occurred as a result.

The minister took us on a field tour. We got into a train that had just arrived from al-Basrah. The sights were very saddening. Coach corridors were filled with food leftovers, [watermelon, pumpkin, or sunflower] seed shells, and palm date stones. Heaps of trash were piled in every corner, not to mention broken glass and vandalism in other coaches.

After this tour, the minister went on to add: The organization's struggling personnel and some ministry units exert untiring efforts to repair what vandals have ruined. We take an average of 8 - 10 coaches daily to maintenance to be repaired and returned to operation.

His excellency the minister also noted the impact of the unjust blockade on railroad activity, especially since most mobile units and the spare parts for these units, and for the railroad lines themselves, come from specialized sources and from monopolist companies. It is impossible to secure these spare parts under the current circumstance. Therefore, the organization's plan under the umbrella of the continued blockade is to focus on increasing maintenance operations at extraordinary rates, relying on the Iraqi management system.

There are plans to restore 39 coaches through a campaign launched by ministry units — track and water facility units. These units have already launched their work. The work on the coaches will be completed shortly.

[Hasan] What are the savings realized through the maintenance and repair activities?

[Ahmad] In 1994, we developed work plans and systems to manufacture alternatives to the materials needed for the work of our units, considering that the blockade has dammed all import gates. As part of the plans and systems, we formed committees specialized in the manufacture of spare parts and alternatives in light of the nature and specialization of each unit. We were able to produce spare parts for idle equipment or for equipment that needed to be modified. We were also able to produce spare parts and molds for spare parts at the units' foundries and workshops. Moreover, we manufactured atypical spare parts and alternatives whose manufacture relies on technical equipment and expertise. These have included precision parts produced at the laboratories and workshops of the Iraqi Airlines and of the railroad and port organizations. The number of parts manufactured in the first half of this year amounted to 71,939 parts valued at over $2 million.

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[Hasan] What about the security that we lack in our trains?

[Ahmad] The organization has adopted several strict security measures in cooperation with all the official security authorities to ensure stable security in this important part of our transport system — a part that which has always been tranquil and in which the passenger has felt safe.

Telephones Seek Heat

(The telephones file is an important file because of the great services the telephone renders. The telephone's firm connection with people's life and their effort and time has gained telephones this importance. Our "dialogue" with the minister on telephones began with the apparatus itself, whose price has risen extraordinarily.)

[Hasan] What capability does the ministry have to supply telephone sets and what is its capability to repair damaged telephones?

[Ahmad] The telephone set is manufactured locally by a joint sector company controlled by the Ministry of Minerals and Industry. The numbers produced are not compatible with the demand for this apparatus. This is why our ministry has devoted attention to repairing damaged units, relying on our intrinsic resources, on Iraqi modifications and management, and on securing the spare parts needed for maintenance. There are eight centers for the maintenance of telephone sets in Baghdad and 12 centers in the governorates. A total of 23,153 sets were repaired in Baghdad and the governorates in 1994 and a total of 14,066 sets were repaired in the first nine months of 1995.

[Hasan] How many telephone lines will the ministry provide to subscribers this year and next year, considering that there are unmet applications since the 1970's?

[Ahmad] Practically, no new exchanges have been installed since 1987. Telephone lines given to citizens are a part of the remaining capacity of the exchanges. They also come from the lines secured by the stock-taking that we conduct from time to time at all exchanges. The capacity of some exchanges is no longer compatible with the geographic areas they serve, such as al-Kazimiyah, al-Bayya', al-Dawrah, and Karbala' exchanges. Meanwhile, we find that some exchanges, such as al-Rashidiyah exchange, have the capability to provide lines to the citizens. The reason we find exchanges which have applications that have gone unanswered for a long time is that they lack the capability.

[Hasan] The citizen has difficulty communicating with the outside world, especially because of high cost and short call duration. What are the external communication areas at present?

[Ahmad] International calls going out to other countries cost $1 a minute. As a consequence of the blockade, controls have had to be established for these calls so as to curtail the foreign exchange obligations emanating from them. This is why calls have been limited to five minutes and why these calls can be made through service number 105 and through a number of offices in Baghdad and the governorates. There are six offices in Baghdad and 14 offices in the governorates to make international calls. Nearly 1,500 calls are made daily through the 105 number and 1,950 calls through the offices. The ministry has provided a service through which the citizen can speak for an unlimited time if the dialed party pays the cost. This is called the "collect" service. To get this service, number 5499000 has to be contacted. This service is open to Britain, the United States, and France.

[Hasan] Public telephones render the citizen an important service. Do you plan to expand in this area? How will these telephones be protected from vandalism and thefts and how will you overcome the difficulty of obtaining small coins that are used to make calls?

[Ahmad] Public telephones are a cultural phenomenon. However, they have been vandalized constantly, and this has motivated the ministry to limit the leasing of public phones to shop owners in areas where there is high demand for phones. Currently, a total of 57 agents are supplied with public telephones. A study is underway to evaluate the experiment, which may be subsequently reviewed.

Out of its awareness of the need to provide a good service to the citizens, the ministry has opened telephone offices in a number of important and crowded complexes. There are 12 such offices in Baghdad and eight in the governorates. Their work has been developed to include not just the telephone service but also to collect telephone bills and to sell stamps and passenger tickets. There is a plan to increase these offices.

Iraq: Tourist, Religious Projects in Al-Najaf

96LH0124E Baghdad AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic 16 Dec 95 p 4

[Report by Faruq Hamdi]

[FBIS Translated Text] Al-Najaf—'Ali 'Abd-al-Karim al-Sa'dun, governor of al-Najaf, has affirmed that President Leader Saddam Husayn — may God protect him — pays special attention to the province. He noted that despite the oppressive blockade imposed on Iraq, plans

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are continuing to establish religious, service, social, educational, medical, and agricultural tourism projects. He said that the province is witnessing, under the auspices of the leader and symbol, horizontal and vertical expansion in the housing sector. More than 42 modern residential complexes, with streets, electricity, water, sewage, schools, and health services, have been built. A major campaign was launched this year to maintain the holy shrines at a cost of 54.145 million dinars. The maintenance and repairs involve gold covering, mosaics, electricity, water, walls, and other services. They also include the sidewalks around the shrine. He added that the municipality has begun selling land to people who would like to build commercial stores in the city center. He noted that more than 20 commercial buildings are under construction in an area of more than 155,000 square meters. Parking places are also being built over an area of 500,000 square meters along the al-Najaf-Karbala'-Manadhirah road. We are also building a central transportation garage for the province, he said, adding that an area of more than 80,000 square meters will be allocated for building a vegetable and fish market. An area of 600 square meters will be allocated for the construction of a commercial building in the city center. He noted that the health authorities in the province provide medical services to the people 24 hours a day in five main hospitals, 34 health centers, and 10 popular clinics. The educational authorities in the province have repaired more than 70 schools and institutes at a cost of more than 4.322 million dinars. The maintenance of educational equipment has cost 2.040 million dinars. The present agricultural season was characterized by extensive activity, he said. All the lands designated for strategic crops and vegetables, particularly tomatoes, were planted.

Iraq: Article Views Dinars, Dollars, Carpets

96LH0077A Baghdad ALIF BA' in Arabic 10 Jan 96 pp 20-21

[Article by Siham al-Shujayri]

[FBIS Translated Text] The matter, quite simply, is as follows: At the beginning of this year, a man purchased an Iraqi-made oriental rug measuring 3x2 from a state enterprise for 3,000 Iraqi dinars and then sold it immediately for 6,000 dinars [D]. The same man was surprised shortly thereafter to learn that the same type of rug was being sold, according to official prices, for D300,000.

His face etched with amazement, he began questioning his friends. What has happened? How could this enterprise set such astronomical prices for a rug? What has happened to the oriental rug market? We too ask: In this environment, is there a demand for rugs?

This was the starting point for our report. We visited automated and manual rug factories to take a close look at the antique and contemporary oriental rug markets spread throughout Baghdad and other governorates, and at the sale of oriental rugs in auctions.

Waiting To Resume Production

Dozens of persons of various ages display various types of rugs. Each one tries to spark interest in the purchase of his goods. Some have set up stores or auctions. Others have set up shop next to stores, while still others prefer to seclude themselves in allies and narrow stores which are difficult to reach without guidance from friends and acquaintances. There are also large stores which sell various rugs at prices determined by the size and type of each rug.

Before entering into details, it should be said that the state rug factories have now virtually ceased production due to the unjust blockade. The blockade is having a direct effect on the volume and quality of production, because it is preventing the importation of raw materials. Raw materials are available in almost negligible amounts, even though some raw materials can be procured domestically. State and domestic factories are working with what they have and are attempting to obtain additional materials. Their machines are waiting to resume production as soon as the circumstances created by the blockade are, God willing, overcome.

In general, the Iraqi rug industry enjoys a major advantage. Iraqi rugs, because of their excellence and distinction, have won many medals and prizes in international rug fairs held in many countries.

Hammurabi Rug

Rugs are made throughout the world. However, the materials and methods for producing them differ according to locale. Perhaps the oldest historical reference to the oriental rug industry is that which asserts that "rugs appeared in Iraq with the Assyrians, Hammurabi being the first person in history to walk on a rug in the conventional sense of the word as we know it." Thus, to understand this industry, one must recognize that there is a noticeable range in the quantity and quality of rugs. Likewise, rug prices are subject to price fluctuations in the market in general. However, it is exceedingly clear that the oriental rug business has been profitable since antiquity. Most oriental rug markets deal with antique rugs, because, for years now, Iraqi factories have been unable to produce output that can flood the market and thus cause a drop in rug prices!

Hajj Khadir Salman, a man with extensive experience in the purchase and sale of oriental rugs informs me:

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The wool and weave of some types of oriental rugs are adulterated through the mixing of the wool with various fibers. Some mix the raw materials with yarn and material. Some vendors, when asked about this material, provided opinions which differed in accordance with differences between oriental rugs. Some of them blame housekeepers regarding their method for maintaining oriental rugs. Others are amazed at homeowners' deliberate neglect of rare oriental rugs.

Some producers are also masters in the method for blending yarn in such a way as to make it difficult to detect or identify it.

Commerce in Luxuries

The interest in purchasing oriental rugs is no longer what it was in the past. Some consider oriental rugs luxuries or antiques. They buy centuries-old rugs, whose durability in some cases is a function of their antiquity.

I asked a number of rug dealers about the best types of rugs in the world. The response was uniform: Rugs are made in different countries, e.g., Iraq, Iran, Turkey, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Egypt, Rumania, Korea, and Morocco. The short supply of rugs is reportedly the reason behind the rug auctions, the speculation in rugs, and the increase in rug prices. Thus, a 4x3 Iraqi "Babil" rug has been sold at an auction for D150,000, compared to D300 in 1990 and D3,000 in 1992 or 1993, while another with dimensions of 3x2 has been sold for D65,000, compared to D150-200 in 1990.

Neighborhood Peddlers

Neighborhood peddlers also buy oriental rugs. They purchase them from families, most of whom do not know their value. They then sell them at low prices. These rugs then begin to be traded at higher prices.

I asked one peddler to help me determine a fair price for an old oriental rug which my grandmother inherited from her father when she married in the 1920's. How could a rug of such a rare make and design be sold?

The man stood in front of the rug and began to inspect its edges. He then "scratched" it and rubbed his palm on it. He said, without hesitation, it is an Ottoman rug. The weave is Ottoman, and the designs are familiar to everyone.

He added: Be careful. Do not let anyone deceive you. It is worth more than one-half million dinars, because it is an antique that some would love to buy.

I was amazed at the price quoted by this man. My brother had only to offer the rug in an auction organized by one of his friends. It was actually sold for slightly less than the peddler's quote.

These peddlers roam frequently between allies and in stores to purchase rugs sold by residents and then sell them in auctions or in special places for this purpose. The prices are determined according to the skill of the peddlers, who have extensive experience in acquiring rare rugs at the lowest prices. Thus, some attribute the high prices of oriental rugs to the growth of such peddlers. It has reached the point where everyone deals in rugs, which as caused the rug market to pick up with noticeable speed.

Loom...Pile Weave

"After the wool is cut, it is left under sunlight for a full year, perhaps more. Then, it is spun. This requires another year. Then, it is dyed. After that it is given to a weaver to create the most beautiful rug." This summary is provided by Abu-'Abbas, a homeowner who possess a loom for weaving rugs using the manual, pile weave method. I asked him about the stages involved in the making of a rug.

[Siham al-Shujayri] What type of rug is desirable?

[Abu-'Abbas] A desirable rug is one with certain specifications, such as good wool, a beautiful design, an appropriate length and width, and attractiveness. However, the best types are woven by hand, because this method offers precision, durability, and fine artistic beauty. The automated method involves a uniform design and form, which does not allow for artistry.

The domestic carpet and rug industry is spread throughout the homes of most of Iraq's governorates. There are specialized markets for the sale and purchase of the raw materials used to produce rugs using various types of spun thread and wool.

Certain districts and sub-districts are famous for their rug industry, such as several districts in the governorates of Babil, Karbala', al-Najaf, Wasit, al-Anbar, Baghdad, and most of the governorates of the north and south. The weavers of each governorate have left their mark on this craft, which has also been influenced by the environment, necessity, and local taste.

Wool cost between D500 and 1,000/kg and perhaps more for rare types of wool, which is dyed, spun, and prepared for weaving by women.

High-quality rugs may cost more than D5,000. Rugs of lesser quality cost less. Most types of oriental rugs cost more than D100,000.

The more expensive oriental rugs are bought by rural households for guest houses, to adorn walls, or by tourists and visitors, who purchase them in abundance as a type of antique.

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Manual...Automated

More than one citizen who likes to frequent rug enterprises to purchase what they have whispered to us that some rugs have been slipped to people in an unknown way.

We went to the Public Enterprise for Wool Rugs. It is clearly failing to supply the demand for rugs, although it is laboring hard with its capabilities to fulfill the demand. Its failure is in some ways warranted by the general circumstances.

I ask Mr. Mundhir al-Naqshabandi, the director-general of the enterprise, about reports that the official price of a "Baghdad" rug is D230,000 and that of a "Babil" rug is D185,000.

He responds: The enterprise is currently not supplying rugs to citizens. It is not setting rug prices, because its output is limited. We are attempting to use our limited output to supply organizations, ministries, and departments involved in the rug industry with requirements such as nylon fibers and various dyes, all of which requires hard currency.

[Siham al-Shujayri] What is the current production volume?

[Mundhir al-Naqshabandi] The rug machines are limited with respect to rug dimensions, not volume. Under the current circumstances, production is limited because of the difficulty of importing raw materials required by the rug industry.

[Siham al-Shujayri] What about prices?

[Mundhir al-Naqshabandi] The prices of rugs are currently moderate relative to the increases that have occurred in raw material prices. Their prices do not exceed 50 percent of the prices prevailing in the domestic markets.

[Siham al-Shujayri] What is your opinion following the sale of oriental rug factories to the private sector?

[Mundhir al-Naqshabandi] Al-Nafidh Rug Factory has been sold as a corporation. This has not affected our enterprise's activity regarding the automated manufacture of rugs, because the product produced by al-Nafidh Rug Factory differs from mechanically produced rugs.

[Siham al-Shujayri] Does the enterprise supply raw materials to private and state factories?

[Mundhir al-Naqshabandi] The enterprise currently supplies the Public Enterprise for Hand-Made Rugs, state workshops that produce hand-made rugs, and producer cooperatives with the spun thread that they require to produce hand-made carpets and rugs. Official agencies are also supplied with rugs of various types.

We then went to the Public Enterprise for Hand-Made Rugs, which was established in 1993 to revitalize, spread, and develop the hand-made rug industry, an ancient industry as old as the civilization of the Fertile Crescent. This enterprise's main goal, according to its bylaws, is to provide good, rewarding employment opportunities to citizens in various parts of the country, especially for women and young people in areas where the labor force is concentrated. It does not rely on sophisticated equipment and machinery, but on domestically produced equipment and tools. It also relies exclusively on local materials. It produces handicrafts and is based on the development of mental and manual skills. It is constantly advertising that it provides jobs for Iraqi families of the "private sector" by providing them with the raw materials and requirements needed to produce different types of rugs in exchange for rewarding wages.

I asked Ms. Sarab Qasim, the director-general of the enterprise about its production volume. She responds:

[Sarab Qasim] The production volume differs from one period to the next, according to the availability or unavailability of raw materials. Also, there is a sharp labor turnover in some factories at times, as the workers, all of whom are young women, leave to marry, move to a new area, or take other jobs.

[Siham al-Shujayri] To what extent is there cooperation with state factories?

[Sarab Qasim] The availability of raw materials, equipment, and tools depends fully on other state enterprises. The Public Enterprise for the Cotton and Wool Yarn Industries supplies cotton yarn.

[Siham al-Shujayri] What is the volume of rugs which the enterprise supplies to citizens?

[Sarab Qasim] The enterprise is not an outlet for citizens. It produces only to fill the state's demand.

[Siham al-Shujayri] What about factories in the governorates?

[Sarab Qasim] Ten factories are subordinate to the enterprise. They are located in the governorates of Baghdad, al-Ta'mim, al-Anbar, Babil, and Dhi Qar. The enterprise also provides technical supervision over eight factories spread throughout various governorates. However, they are subordinate to other enterprises subordinate to the Ministry of Industry.

"Carpeting" is also selling well. Many households have turned to carpeting, perhaps because it can be spread easily over any surface desired to be covered. It is also considerably cheaper than rugs. The Iraqi Company for

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the Production of Floor Coverings and Carpets, being a private company, chose not to provide information on its production and prices. One meter of carpeting sells for about D3,000 (the price may by several hundred dinars higher) compared to 600 fils [one fil = 1/1000 of a dinar] in 1990. Some prefer to purchase carpeting instead of rugs, despite the indispensable elegance and original design of rugs, and this has placed some who deal in rugs in a situation similar to that of the market in general.

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Israel: Peres Claims Likud Knows Reports on Jerusalem Division False

TA1903082496 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0800 GMT 19 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Shim'on Peres said that the Likud was attacking the Labor Party over Jerusalem despite knowing that there is no intention of dividing Jerusalem.

This morning, Shim'on Peres told mayors from around the world, including Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert, that even the latter knew there was no truth to the reports about plans to divide Jerusalem.

Our political correspondent Shlomo Raz reports that the prime minister stressed Israel's efforts to reinforce the security forces at the crossing points between the autonomous areas and Israel and to step up the war against radical Islamic organizations.

Israel: Beilin, Labor Deny Olmert Charges of Jerusalem Partition

TA1803185996 Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew 1700 GMT 18 Mar 96

[Video report by anchorman Ya'aqov Eylon and political correspondent 'Imanu'el Rosen]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Eylon] We start tonight's newscast with a new and detailed charge that the Israeli Government, or at least one minister, Yosi Beilin, is holding indirect negotiations with Palestinian representatives which include references to a future partitioning of Jerusalem. The story was revealed by Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert, and the charge is that Ron Pundaq and Ya'ir Hirschfeld, the architects of the Oslo agreements, have presented Palestinian Authority [PA] elements with a draft offer for the partitioning of Jerusalem, including maps. Olmert says that Minister Yosi Beilin is behind the move. Our correspondent 'Imanu'el Rosen:

[Begin recording] [Rosen] Are Hirschfeld and Pundaq, the Oslo architects, again complicating things for the Israeli Government? A map entitled A Divided-Expanded Jerusalem is included in a secret report by the Jerusalem Institute for Israel studies. Areas in blue remain in Israeli hands; areas in pink will be handed over to the PA, including areas in Ra's al-'Amud, al-Tur, 'Isawiyah, Shu'fat, Bayt Hanina, and parts of the Old City, excluding Jewish neighborhoods. Jerusalem Mayor Olmert claimed today that Yosi Beilin, who received the report, passed it on to Pundaq and Hirschfeld intending for them to deliver it further to Palestinian elements, and it was indeed presented to Faysal al-Husayni.

[Olmert] These maps were drafted as part of an academic study. They include an option of partitioning Jerusalem in the most explicit and unequivocal manner, and forsaking Israeli sovereignty in large parts of the most important areas of Jerusalem. The map was given to Hirschfeld and Pundaq, the two professors who held political contacts with the Palestinians with the knowledge of the senior echelons of the Israeli Government — Minister Yosef Beilin, to name one. This means that the Palestinian elements now have maps that include an option of dividing Jerusalem and were presented with the knowledge of the Israeli Government.

[Segal] This is yet another lie in a series of Likud and Olmert false tales, said Minister Beilin. The Likud fears that a Labor government will bring about a situation in which the Palestinians will recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. This is the only way I can explain the avalanche of lies about division maps. There is no grain of truth in any of these stories.

Ya'ir Hirschfeld said: I do not intend to take part in either Labor or Likud elections propaganda. If anyone claims that I drew or delivered maps on the division of Jerusalem, I will consider suing him. This is a matter of academic freedom. No one is considering the partitioning of Jerusalem, Labor sources said, but it seems that the Likud after the terror attacks is again placing Jerusalem at the top of the elections agenda. [end recording]

[Eylon] And now 'Imanu'el Rosen is in the studio. Why is this a secret document?

[Rosen] The document is indeed secret. We can see that the word secret appears on top of every page in this report. It is secret, despite being an academic research, because Jerusalem is a sensitive issue. The report was written for Minister Yosi Beilin's eyes only. Olmert claims that the report went from Beilin to the Palestinians.

[Eylon] And the document explicitly says that Jerusalem will be divided?

[Rosen] Yes. Here is a headline that reads: Alternative C — speaking of the partition of the city; part of East Jerusalem under Palestinian sovereignty. The document says that this option is relevant because it yields a significant Palestinian reward for Israel's agreement to recognize Palestinian sovereignty in East Jerusalem. The reward, as mentioned later in the document, speaks about Jerusalem's remaining an open city without boundaries. In any event, the document clearly speaks of an Israeli municipality and a Palestinian municipality, and says that Israeli citizens living under the PA will enjoy the services of that municipality.

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Israel: Shahal Comments on Separation Plan

TA1803162996 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1400 GMT 18 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Philip Wilcox, the United States' top antiterrorist official, today took an on-the-spot look at some of Israel's problems. Wilcox, the U.S. State Department's coordinator for countering terrorism, joined Israel's Minister for Public Security Moshe Shahal for a tour along the Green Line and an explanation of the security system that is being introduced there. Shahal told his visitor that over the past several months a similar system in the north of the Gaza Strip has resulted in 800 Palestinians' being caught as they tried to infiltrate into Israel. More on this from reporter Alan Ben-'Ami:

[Begin recording] [Ben-'Ami] Explaining the concept behind what he calls the separation zone between Israel and the Palestinians in the West bank, Minister Shahal said the aim is to establish a security system and not to cut off contact or movement between the two communities.

[Shahal] The basic idea is not to have fences. The minimum that has been recommended by the army and the policy is all in all about 28 km out of the 360 km which is the length of what I would say is the zone that separates the West Bank from the State of Israel. The fence that has been recommended right here, near Qalqilyah and Tulkarm, is about 20 km. We shortened the fence because Prime Minister Peres recommended that. We will base the relations as much as possible on neighborly relations between the mayors of the cities. But to give us time to respond, there was a need, for example here between Kefar Saba and Qalqilyah to have something that will alert the security forces if there will be a need because even by bicycle you need only five minutes from Qalqilyah to the suburbs of Kefar Saba, and it happened in the past and it can happen also in the future.

[Ben-'Ami] The zone will be anything from 500 meters to 2 km wide, depending on topography, with the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] responsible for security measures on the eastern side, the regular police on the Israeli side to the west, and Border Police patrols and activity straddling both sides of the so-called Green Line.

[Shahal] Instead of a line, we recommended to adopt the name of a zone that separates the two areas because we didn't want to prejudice the future borderline between the two entities. [passage omitted] [end recording]

Israel: Peres Said To Promise Golan Development, Says al-Asad 'Asleep'

TA1803165796 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1600 GMT 18 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] This afternoon, Yehuda Wolman, head of the Golan Regional Council, met with the prime minister in his office in Jerusalem. After the meeting, Wolman said that almost all the requests he presented to Shim'on Peres were accepted. The prime minister promised to build 20 additional housing units in the Kibbutzim of Mevo Hama and Kfar Haruv, and that some 350 housing units that have been built recently but not connected to the local infrastructure, will be connected.

Wolman told our correspondent Gil Litman that he received the impression that the development drive on the Golan will continue. He further said that, at the beginning of the meeting with the prime minister, Peres remarked about the state of negotiations between Israel and Syria by saying: Al-Asad is asleep.

Israel: Baraq Says IDF 'Will Find Ways To Hit Hizballah'

TA1903082096 Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew 19 Mar 96 p 3

[Report by Yosi Levi, Yehuda Goren, and Avi Ashkenazi]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq said on Israel Television's Popolitiqa program that the "IDF [Israel Defense Forces] will carry out many offensive operations in south Lebanon, even beyond the security zone, but they will naturally not be made public."

Baraq said that he is convinced that the IDF will find ways to hit Hizballah while observing the constraint of not hitting civilians. He said that the real address, from our point of view, is Hizballah. The Lebanese Government is a second responsible factor.

"The scope of operations could expand to the extent that it would require the IDF to act in a way that also harms the interests of the Lebanese Government," Baraq said.

Tension was felt along the northern border yesterday. Many residents said they are prepared to remain in underground shelters for several days if the IDF deals a heavy blow to Hizballah. But many kibbutzim in the Upper Galilee fear that if the tension and uncertainty in the north continue they will sustain heavy losses from the cancellation of room reservations for the Passover holiday. [passage omitted]

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Israel: IDF Plans Separate Crossing Points From West Bank to Israel

TA1903055796 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0400 GMT 19 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The IDF [Israel Defense Forces] Central Command is preparing a program to set up crossing points from the West Bank into Israel. A Qol Yisra'el reporter says that under the plan, separate crossing points would be established for Israelis and Palestinians.

In addition, five stations would be set up for the transfer of goods to and from the West Bank to Israel, similar to those already in use in the Gaza Strip. The first crossing point is planned for Tarqumiyah, south of Hebron, and it is due to go into operation in two months time.

Israel: IDF Arrests 7 West Bank Arabs for 'Hostile' Activities

TA1903072096 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0500 GMT 19 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The IDF [Israel Defense Forces] has arrested seven Arabs suspected of hostile activities in the Abu-Dis, al-'Ayzariyah, Hebron, and Ramallah areas.

The arrests were conducted within the framework of activities against Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement].

Israel: Supreme Court Upholds Demolition of 'Terrorists' Homes

TA1903081696 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0700 GMT 19 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The High Court of Justice has rejected the seven appeals submitted by family members of Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] and Islamic Jihad terrorists against the house demolition orders issued by the head of the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] Central Command.

Our correspondent Mikha'el Tuchfeld reports that five of the appeals were unanimously rejected by Judges Gavri'el Bach, Misha'el Hesin, and Dalya Dorner. Judge Dorner was the minority opinion with regard to two of the appeals.

Four of the terrorists in question are the suicide bombers who carried out the attacks at Ashqelon junction, in Ramat Gan, the first bombing attack on the no. 18 bus in Jerusalem, and the attack on the no. 26 bus in Jerusalem. The three others helped transport the explosives, as well as helped train and instruct the suicide bombers.

The High Court ruled that the demolitions could deter additional terrorists who now know that their deeds endanger not only their own lives but their families' homes as well. The High Court asserted that it had been proved that the demolition orders took into account the severity of the terrorist actions, the degree of involvement of the other residents of the house, as well as considerations such as how to destroy the relevant house without damaging adjoining structures or harming innocent people.

Judge Dalya Dorner, in a minority opinion, ruled that the attacks committed by two of the terrorists had taken place a long time ago and therefore called for other punitive measures. However, the other judges ruled that there was nothing wrong with the fact that the house demolitions had been put off in order to examine whether or not the security situation had improved. Following the recent wave of horrendous terrorist attacks, there was no longer any room to put off the decision to demolish the terrorists' houses.

Attorney Le'a Tzemel, who represented four of the appellants, told our correspondent that the court had surrendered to public opinion, erred in its judgment and acted out of hysteria.

Israel: Plan To Deport Islamic Activists Seeks Political Approval

TA1903054196 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0400 GMT 19 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Various elements have put together a plan to deport dozens of Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] and Islamic Jihad activists, including some family members of Hamas terrorists. According to the plan, only males are to be deported. Our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem reports that a list of deportees has already been drawn up; however, the plan still has to be approved by the political echelon.

Our correspondent Mikha'el Tuchfeld adds that this morning the High Court of Justice will rule on the appeals submitted by the families of seven Hamas activists, who were involved in the recent terrorist attacks, against the demolition of their houses.

Israel: Gaza Closure To Be Further Eased 'Tomorrow'

TA1803152296 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1400 GMT 18 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A further easing of the closure on the Gaza Strip is to take effect beginning tomorrow. Israel is increasing to 2,000 the number of Palestinians allowed to work in the Erez industrial zone, the level that existed before the closure.

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The Liaison and Coordination Committee will also allow eight trucks of flowers from Gaza to be transferred to a packing house near Ashdod. Trucks will also be allowed to bring goods from Ashdod back to Gaza.

Israel: Al-Fawwar Refugee Camp Closure Lifted Temporarily

TA1903081496 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0700 GMT 19 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] This morning, the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] lifted the closure on al-Fawwar refugee camp south of Hebron in order to permit the camp's residents to purchase foodstufs. The closure will be reimposed at 1800 [1500 GMT].

The suicide bombers who carried out the terrorist attacks in Jerusalem and Ashqelon came from al-Fawwar.

Israel: Former Shin Beth Chief on Hamas, 'Arafat Antiterror Moves

BR1803130396 Milan PANORAMA in Italian 21 Mar 96 pp 92-93

[Interview with Karmi Gillon, former "head of Israeli intelligence," by Simonetta Della Seta; place and date not given: "'Arafat Bound To Cooperate With Us"; all names as published]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] [Della Seta] Do you feel strong, unaffected by what has happened?

[Gillon] I remain steadfast. And so too, despite everything, does Shin Beth, which I transferred to my successor, Amy Ayalon.

[Della Seta] The Israeli intelligence services were legendary. So why the failures; why the request for help from the Americans?

[Gillon] Secret services have always helped each other. The fact that America has decided to publicize the fact has an international political significance. But this will not alter things on the ground. What will be important are the measures taken by us and by the Palestinian intelligence services to adapt ourselves to the complex phenomenon of the kamikazes.

[Della Seta] Why?

[Gillon] The enemy now comes from the fundamentalist movements, with a strong religious ideology, and it is very different from the nonconfessional and pragmatic enemy of the past. With the latter it was even possible to reach a compromise. Here, however, there is no reason except fanaticism.

[Dell Seta] Is it a matter of individuals or technology?

[Gillon] What characterizes them is, first and foremost, human recruitment. They have a training that in practice starts at kindergarten age. Schools, charitable and social welfare organizations, clinics — social activity directed toward this kind of objective, namely, to achieve political results by means of military actions. Then the technology, the equipment, and the know-how are added.

[Della Seta] Where do they come from?

[Gillon] Basically, the technology is not complex. These people learn it in training not far from here, in Iran and Sudan, which is Hamas' real military headquarters, protected by the Sudanese Muslims' spiritual leader, Hasan al-Turabi.

[Della Seta] Basically, the border between Gaza and Egypt has proven problematical.

[Gillon] Immediately after the establishment of Palestinian autonomy tunnels were discovered through which all kinds of "goods" reached the territories. Furthermore, the inhabitants of Gaza live from fishing, and fish is not all they bring in with their boats. The sea is large and difficult to monitor.

[Della Seta] Does nothing come from Israel?

[Gillon] We have had three cases of Israeli Arabs involved in the attacks. The latest was the recent one of the Israeli Arab who, for $1,100, hid in his truck the kamikaze who blew himself up Tel Aviv. There is no proof of other cooperation between Israeli elements and Palestinian terrorism.

[Della Seta] Since when have you been studying trends in suicide attacks?

[Gillon] The first kamikaze blew himself up in 1992, thus creating new problems: Indeed, suicide is the very mechanism of the explosion. In other kinds of attacks, clocks or chemical devices are used; here they have found the most perfect and intelligent mechanism in the world — man. Whatever measures you adopt against him, you cannot neutralize him. At most, he may blow himself up in an unforeseen location. What is a normal terrorist's greatest fear? Being captured and killed. For a kamikaze, this fear does not exist.

[Della Seta] So what is to be done?

[Gillon] As things stand, it is essential to adopt measures against the suicide's family as a means of restraining the would-be "martyr". I imagine that if a kamikaze knows that his family — even though they do not deserve it — will pay with the demolition of their home or even deportation, he will think very hard before going to his death.

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[Della Seta] But the suicide is only part of the system.

[Gillon] Indeed, our work is focused on the organizers. The man responsible for all the Jerusalem bus attacks is Hassan Salameh, a real mainstay of terror, as was "engineer" Yahia 'Ayyash and as is his successor, Mohammed Dess. They are both in Gaza, and at large.

[Della Seta] Why?

[Gillon] The problem is that the Palestinian intelligence services do not receive the correct orders from Yasir 'Arafat. 'Arafat tried for a long time to negotiate with Hamas to reach a political agreement and to appear as the leader of all Palestinians, whether supporters of his or not. The problem arose when the results of these negotiations were presented to the Hamas leadership, who live abroad and who strongly opposed an agreement. Why? They want to continue the armed struggle against Israel. And since the people in charge live in Damascus and Khartoum, the methods have remained the same.

[Della Seta] With what results?

[Gillon] 'Arafat is now making greater efforts, but still very cautiously so as not to cause splits within his people. Nonetheless his men are much more involved in the struggle against Hamas.

[Della Seta] How important are coordination, contacts, and exchanges between the various security services?

[Gillon] It is part of our tradition. Furthermore, the fight against terror is supported in all civilized states. It is very important. Not because it brings immediate, concrete solutions. But ideas are exchanged, new methods are learned.. In fact let us consider contacts with the Italian services, with which I have met several times: In their long experience of struggle against the terrorism of the Red Brigades and the mafia, the Italians have developed some very important theories and methods. We have everything to learn from them.

Israel: Major General Dani Yatom Said Next Head of Mosad

TA1903053996 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0400 GMT 19 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Major General Dani Yatom, the prime minister's military secretary, will be the next head of the Mosad. Prime Minister Shim'on Peres will announce Yatom's appointment at the next cabinet session. This is the first time that the censor has permitted the identity of the head of the Mosad to be made public.

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Jordan: Pro-Hamas Islamists Reportedly Target of Arrest Campaign

JN1903112696 Amman AL-SABIL in Arabic 19-25 Mar 96 p 1

[Report by the political affairs editor]

[FBIS Translated Text] The [Jordanian] Government has launched a large-scale arrest campaign against a large number of Islamists for sympathizing with the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas. An official source said the campaign will escalate, particularly because of the increasing pressure from Israel, the Palestinian self-rule authority, and the U.S. Administration on al-Kabariti's government, which said it is prepared to meet all the requirements of peace.

This campaign conflicts with the al-Kabariti government's policy and its "White Revolution" aimed at increasing freedom and eliminating certain practices that prevailed under the former government. The arrest campaign also conflicts with the official declarations that Hamas has no presence in Jordan, except for its media figures, and that any military action by Hamas is planned and carried out on Palestinian soil.

The primary indications of the tense relations between the Islamists and the government show that several quarters are interested in striking at the Jordanian model, which throughout the past years has maintained balanced relations between the government and the Islamists, thus disproving the claim that there can be no coexistence with the Islamists. Moreover, any tension in the relationship between the government and the Islamists would ease the pressure on Israel and on Yasir 'Arafat, head of the Palestinian self-rule authority. Both Israel and 'Arafat are currently launching fierce arrest campaigns against everything related to Islam in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. It appears that there is a serious effort on the part of Israel and the self-rule authority to export their internal crisis to Jordan.

A senior official in the Islamic movement said that the Muslim Brotherhood [MB] and the Islamic Action Front [IAF] in Jordan support Hamas from a religious and political viewpoint. This, he said, is a declared position, and pursuing citizens for their political positions is a violation of the law and the Constitution. He pointed out that the MB and the IAF are not related to Hamas; Hamas is a Palestinian movement that operates inside Palestine only.

Despite affirmations by a senior Jordanian official that the relationship between the government and the Islamic movement is stable, a leading Islamic figure said that there are fears that these arrests will further strain the atmosphere, which will have negative effects on both sides. The leading Islamic figure voiced concern over the arrest campaigns, which he feared were a result of the Sharm al-Shaykh summit.

Jordan: 'Arrest Campaign' Launched Against Pro-Hamas Activists

MM1903111296 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 19 Mar 96 pp 1, 6

[Report by Salamah Ni'mat and Tariq al-Mawmani: "Jordan: Arrests Among Hamas Circles"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Amman — Islamic movement sources in Jordan said yesterday that the security authorities have launched an arrest campaign against those suspected of carrying out activities in Jordan supportive of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas).

The sources revealed that Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti told some Islamic Action Front leaders at a meeting yesterday that the quarters concerned have begun to arrest a number of activists suspected of being affiliated — organizationally — with Hamas. The sources pointed out that the prime minister explained to Islamic movement representatives "the background and dimensions of the arrests" in the light of the resolutions adopted after the Sharm al-Shaykh summit.

The Jordanian prime minister said that Jordan does not believe that "there is legitimate terrorism and illegitimate terrorism... or desirable terrorism and undesirable terrorism... it believes that terrorism is terrorism, and that terrorism is condemned, whatever the justifications and motives." [passage omitted]

Jordan: Amman Said Setting Up Camp for Iraqis Working Against Saddam

MM1903121396 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 19 Mar 96 pp 1, 4

[Unattributed report: "Camp for Iraqis in Jordan Base for Toppling Saddam"]

[FBIS Translated Text] London, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT — Informed Jordanian sources in London have revealed that the Jordanian authorities have decided to set up a camp for the Iraqi nationals present on Jordanian territory in order to gather together those residing illegally and receive new arrivals from Iraq.

The sources told AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT that the camp will be built as a military city [madinah 'askariyah] so that it will — with the passage of time — become a rear base for Iraqis working to topple the regime in Baghdad.

The sources pointed out that Jordan is in harmony with itself in this connection: It provides facilities to

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Iraqis fleeing their country in order to spare them homelessness in the world. It also allows those wishing to return to their country to do so, especially after the Interior Ministry's decision to relieve Iraqis violating the residence law of the fines they are supposed to pay.

Furthermore, the Jordanian authorities have studied and are studying the issue of building the camp with Iraqi opposition factions in the framework of the stipulations of the UN Security Council resolutions against Iraq after the Gulf war and the invasion of Kuwait.

The sources added that the camp project is now ready and awaiting the Jordanian Government's approval in preparation for the allocation of the funds needed for its execution. The sources pointed out that the camp will be set up in the al-Azraq area, some 100 km from the Jordanian capital, Amman, on the Amman-Baghdad road.

The sources said that the camp idea is attributable to the increase in the number of Iraqis arriving from Iraq who have been unable to return to their country. In addition, the camp will be a base for the Iraqi opposition, which has been allowed by the Jordanian Government to operate in Jordan, so as to gather them together in one well-protected place.

The sources said that the government is considering the establishment of small projects to enable Iraqi nationals to work and be self-reliant.

The sources said that the aim behind the establishment of the camp is to use it as a pressure card against the Iraqi regime and to cause world public opinion to sympathize with the Iraqi people, who have for five years been suffering from the blockade. Besides, the establishment of the camp will cause the Iraqi problem to be considered a pressing and urgent problem requiring a solution through the parties interested in it, with the help of the United Nations and the major states.

The Jordanian decision was taken in the wake of Jordanian measures exempting Iraqis wishing to return to Iraq from the fines they should pay for violating the immigration law, in order to facilitate their return. As for those who do not want to and cannot return, they will stay, and will thus be hosted in the said camp.

Jordan: Government Rejects 'Blanket Exemption' for Iraqi Nationals

JN1903105196 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 19 Mar 96 p 1

[Report by Sa'idah Kilani]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman — Jordan will exempt Iraqi nationals in Jordan from penalties for over-staying but the help will be extended only in humanitarian cases, Minister of Information Marwan al-Mu'ashshir said Monday.

Dr. al-Mu'ashshir, dismissing reports that the government intended to exempt all Iraqis from penalties amounting to JD37 million [Jordanian dinars], said that the exemption will apply to less than 100 Iraqis out of tens of thousands of Iraqis currently living in the Kingdom.

"I don't know where such figures (JD 37 million) come from...the measure will be applied in humanitarian cases only," he said. "It will not include all Iraqis nor will it include all foreigners.

"It is not a political decision," he stressed.

The daily AL-RA'Y newspaper had said that around 150,000 Iraqis in Jordan will be exempted from penalties amounting to JD37 million.

The report was immediately denied by Minister of Interior 'Awad Khulayfat in a letter to the editor published in the paper's issue on Monday. Dr. Khulayfat, however, did not mention in the letter the exact number of Iraqis in Jordan.

According to Dr. al-Mu'ashshir, the number at present is between 50,000 and 60,000, but is increasing dramatically in recent days due to the large exodus of Iraqis fleeing the poor conditions in their country. An exact number of Iraqis living in Jordan could not be determined at present, he said.

"We are currently studying the situation. There is a large number of Iraqis arriving here because of the wretched conditions in Iraq," Dr. al-Mu'ashshir said.

The minister said that the government took the decision to extend exemption from penalties upon the request of some Iraqi expatriates who wish to return to their country but could not pay the penalty. tens of Iraqis had filed requests at the Ministry of Interior for exemption and the government decided to exempt those who had applied for exemption from penalty.

Jordan: Court Clears AL-MAJD Editor of Charges

JN1903104596 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 19 Mar 96 pp 12, 7

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman — Fahd al-Rimawi, the publisher and editor of the Nasserite weekly AL-MAJD, was found on Monday innocent of charges of disrupting the Kingdom's relations with Bahrain.

The Press and Publication Department that applies the Press and Publications Law had filed a case against Mr. al-Rimawi following an article that appeared in

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the weekly that called on the Bahraini authorities to dismiss its internal security chief Ian Henderson, a British national.

Presiding Judge Jihad al-Khasawinah ruled that since the article was not written by the chief editor and did not lead to a disruption in relations between Jordan and Bahrain, he found Mr. al-Rimawi not guilty.

A press statement released by Mr. al-Rimawi also quoted the judge as saying that suits filed against writers and journalists would lead to muzzling them and to decreasing the margin of freedom of expression.

Mahmud Amin, head of the Press and Publications Department, filed the charge on the basis of a law that dates back to the 1960s and that has never been applied against journalists and writers.

Leading columnist Fahd al-Fanik, one of the witnesses in the case, said in an article published in AL-BILAD weekly that "such a case does not fit the democratic era."

He said that the law on which the charge was based had been frozen and had never been used even during the martial law era.

Mr. Amin replied by saying that the article carried serious implications on Jordanian-Bahraini relations and was the reason behind Bahrain's decision to cancel an agreement to employ 1,500 Jordanians there.

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Lebanon: Suspects in 1976 Murder of U.S. Ambassador Acquitted

NC1803185496 Beirut AL-NAHAR in Arabic 14 Mar 96 p 9

[Report by Bahjat Jabir]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] About 20 years after the criminal assassination on 16 June 1976 of U.S. Ambassador to Lebanon Francis Melloy, First Counselor Robert Waring, and [Lebanese] driver Zuhayr al-Mughrabi, and after a three-year trial, first by the criminal court in Beirut and later by the Court of Cassation, the Court of Cassation, with Judge Mu'in 'Usayran as president and Counselors Ilyas 'Abdallah and Antony 'Isa al-Khuri as members, yesterday passed its verdict on suspects Basim al-Farkh and Namiq Ahmad Kamal. It ruled that their act fell within the scope of the [1991] amnesty law, and it ordered their immediate release unless they are detained for other reasons. [passage omitted]

Lebanon: Judiciary on U.S. Embassy Statement on Terrorist Trial

NC1803185696 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1735 GMT 18 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Magistrate Phillip Khayrallah, president of the Higher Judicial Council; and Magistrate 'Adnan 'Addum, Appeals Public Prosecutor, have decided to place the statement released by the American Embassy regarding the judicial verdict in the case of [the 1976 assassination of] former U.S. Ambassador Francis Meloy on the agenda of the next session of the Higher Judicial Council in order to prepare a reply to this statement. [passage omitted]

[In a related report, Cairo MENA in Arabic at 1635 GMT on 18 March reports: "The statement released by the U.S. Embassy in Beirut today, which criticized the verdict of the Lebanese Court of Cassation for acquitting two defendants in the assassination of U.S. ambassador Francis Meloy in Beirut in 1976, drew the surprise of the Lebanese magistrates, who considered it an infringement of Lebanese judicial powers. A lebanese judicial source said that if the U.S. Embassy wants to take a stance on this issue, it should express its acceptance of the verdict and respect for its content. He said that it seems that the author of the U.S. Embassy statement has viewed the Lebanese judicial verdict without examining the details put forth in the verdict, which justifies every point. The source stressed that the verdict serves justice, which the Lebanese laws cherish. Moreover, the verdict acquitted only two persons who it transpired were not legally present in the crime."]

Lebanon: U.S. Embassy Statement 'Form of Pressure'

NC1903072796 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0530 GMT 19 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Observers have taken note of a statement issued by the U.S. Embassy in Beirut criticizing a Lebanese court's acquittal of those accused of killing former U.S. Embassador Francis Melloy. The observers have said that this statement is a form of pressure on Lebanon and coincides with Israeli threats against Lebanon and Syria, the latest of which were the threats issued by enemy Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq last night. The statement also coincides with Israeli military moves inside the occupied border zone.

The observers link all these developments with the U.S.-Israeli moves and with yesterday's statement by U.S. President Bill Clinton that he wants Israel to be strong.

Lebanon: Hizballah Calls U.S. Statement 'Blatant Intervention'

NC1903090996 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0630 GMT 19 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Zionist-U.S. threats against Lebanon have escalated, threatening harsher and stronger measures against Lebanon and Syria.

Yesterday the U.S. Embassy in Beirut issued a statement criticizing the Lebanese judiciary and its credibility. According to observers, this statement is a link in a series of harsher measures that Washington has decided to take against Lebanon. These measures coincide with and complement the Zionist threats.

An official Lebanese reply to the U.S. Embassy statement is expected. However, pending this reply, Lebanese government sources have expressed great astonishment at the tone of the statement.

Before we review the government's reaction to the U.S. Embassy statement, we note that media reports from Washington have stated that the matter will not end with the U.S. Embassy statement but will include additional U.S. steps.

According to a responsible source in the Lebanese Foreign Ministry, Lebanon cannot remain silent on the blatant U.S. intervention in its domestic affairs and on the deliberate slander of the reputation of the Lebanese judiciary system, particularly as the verdict was issued by the highest judiciary body whose judges enjoy a good reputation.

Informed sources have stated that the Lebanese Foreign Ministry is inclined to summon U.S. Ambassador in Beirut Richard Jones to lodge a formal protest

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against the U.S. statement. Official sources say the U.S. Embassy statement contains very negative implications, including the imposition of more sanctions against Lebanon, in addition to the travel ban on Lebanon. The United States will also increase pressure on the political leadership to make concessions in the peace process negotiations.

Lebanon: Buwayz 'Totally' Rejects U.S. Statement

NC1903120896 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1138 GMT 19 Mar 96

[Report by Ahmad 'Izz-al-Din from the Republican Palace]

[FBIS Translated Text] Leaving the B'abda Palace after a credential presentation ceremony today, Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz said that the U.S. statement on the sentence issued in the case of the assassination of ambassador [Francis] Melloy in 1976 is totally rejected.

Minister Buwayz remarked that the judiciary is independent of and has no connection with politics. He pointed out that the date of the court hearing and the judicial sentence were set before the date of the Sharm al-Shaykh summit was determined.

Buwayz added that the Foreign Ministry will issue a statement this afternoon responding to the U.S. statement and the Israeli threats.

The foreign minister said that the atmosphere is cloudy, adding that it is not the responsibility of the judiciary to respond to political matters because foreign policy is the responsibility of the Foreign Ministry.

Lebanon: U.S. Embassy Statement Said To Contain 'Veiled Messages'

NC1903092896 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0530 GMT 19 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Recent Israeli threats against Lebanon have been accompanied by unprecedented intervention in its domestic affairs, particularly the affairs of the judiciary. The U.S. Embassy in Beirut has accused Lebanon of not shedding the image it acquired during the seventies and eighties. A statement issued by the U.S. Embassy criticized a Court of Cassation verdict in the case of the assassination of U.S. Ambassador Frances Melloy in 1976. The statement contained veiled messages to the Lebanese Government.

In its statement the Embassy expressed its so-called astonishment and profound disappointment at the verdict. The statement threatened that the U.S. Government would not tire in pressing for crimes against Americans to be treated by the judiciary in a manner consistent with the plain language of Lebanese Law and with the demands of justice.

The statement said the United States continues to support Lebanon's recovery. It went on: We have viewed this case as an opportunity for justice to be done after 20 years of waiting. We also hope it will show that the rule of law has returned to Lebanon in a way that shows that Lebanon is no longer a place where terrorists can seek refuge without fear of punishment and that Lebanon no longer merits the negative image of the seventies and eighties. These worthy goals, which both our countries share, have now suffered a serious setback.

The U.S. Embassy said it regretted that the verdict was issued on a day when scores of world leaders were attending a summit in Sharm al-Shaykh to express support for peace in the region and to fight terrorism, which aims to throw the region into chaos.

The statement did not refer to Israeli terrorism practiced against Lebanon on a daily basis. This terrorism, represented by bombardments and attacks, increased on the eve of the Sharm al- Shaykh summit. The Israeli naval blockade of the southern coast continues.

Lebanon: Advance Repulsed; Israelis Said Set To Attack 'Arab World'

NC1803081796 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0630 GMT 18 Mar 96

[Report by Samir 'Alamah]

[FBIS Translated Text] Hostile Zionist forces attempted to advance on the periphery of the township of Yatar at 2200 last night but were confronted by the mujahidin. When the enemy unit reached the ambush prepared by Islamic Resistance fighters, the Resistance detonated an explosive device, causing casualties among the attackers. The Martyr Nidal Surur Group, the Martyr Musa Hamdan Group, and the Martyr Yusuf Faqih Group pounced on the remnants of the Zionist unit, clashing with them using various rockets and machine guns. The mujahidin forced the enemy forces to retreat. At the same time a Resistance support fire unit bombarded the enemy force as it withdrew.

To cover the withdrawal of its defeated troops, the enemy forces shelled the site of the clash with 155-mm artillery.

An Islamic Resistance official has revealed that the Zionist enemy is resorting to its old and treacherous ploys against the citizens of the south and Western al-Biqa' after failing to subdue the people's defiant and steadfast spirit with its guns and combat aircraft. He

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said the enemy did not only shell the targeted areas in the south, but also scattered strange, booby-trapped objects in the southern villages. These objects explode on contact, constituting a dangerous trap for citizens, including children.

The official added: Confronted by this vile, treacherous method, the Islamic Resistance calls on the people to be alert and not to approach or touch any foreign object they find lying on the ground. Such objects must be immediately reported to the security forces so that they can be defused.

The official concluded his remarks by declaring that the Islamic Resistance will maintain its combat capability and confront all the occupation forces' hostile plans. He said the Islamic Resistance will not remain silent over this threat to its people's safety—a red line that cannot be crossed.

As part of the campaign of intimidation, the enemy's sources leaked information that was later published by a French newspaper. It claimed that units of the Zionist army's Golani Brigade had begun special training on a base in the Negev in preparation for attacks on targets deep inside Lebanon and elsewhere in the Arab world, including Iran. The newspaper said the Israeli army has built topographical models representing Lebanese and other Arab territories to practice attacks on them.

Lebanon: Al-Hariri—Steps Taken To Keep Out Palestinian Deportees

MM1803155896 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 16 Mar 96 p 5

[Unattributed report: "Prime Minister al-Hariri Tells AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT: We Have Taken Measures To Prevent Palestinians' Being Deported to Our Territory"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Beirut, AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT — Authoritative and political circles in Lebanon have for the second successive day been following current developments in the region in the wake of the conclusion of the "Summit of Peacemakers" in Sharm al-Shaykh. AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT has learned that high-level contacts have been made over the past 48 hours between Lebanon and Syria to assess the results of the Sharm al-Shaykh summit. It is understood that it was stressed during these contacts that precautionary measures should be taken in Lebanon in the field in anticipation of any potential attacks by Israel. In this context Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri, responding to Israel's hint at the deportation of Palestinian activists to Lebanese territory, told AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT: "The Lebanese authorities have taken the necessary measures to prevent Israel from deporting any Palestinian to Lebanese territory."

Meanwhile, Hizballah's movements — political and military — indicate it is taking all precautions in anticipation of any possibilities. And according to its sources, Hizballah believes that Israel always does the opposite of what it says publicly.

Informed Lebanese sources have told AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT that Hizballah is currently acting on the basis that the "Summit of the Peacemakers" in Sharm al-Shaykh has given Israel the go-ahead to wage a war against it and against Hamas and the Islamic Jihad inside and outside the Palestinian self-rule areas — a war financed by the United States through U.S. President Bill Clinton's pledge to provide Israel with $100 million to help it to "fight terrorism."

Lebanon: 'Militant' Palestinian Deportees Reportedly To Be Barred

NC1803145696 Paris AFP in English 1417 GMT Mar 18 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Beirut, March 18 (AFP) - Lebanon will bar entry to any Palestinian militant expelled by Israel, Defence Minister Muhsin Dallul said Monday as the Jewish state prepared the ground for deportations.

"The army command acting on clear instructions from the cabinet took all the necessary measures," Dallul told AFP after Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres came out in favour Sunday of deporting Palestinian militants.

"Lebanon's position concerning the entry of Palestinian deportees on its territory, namely from the (Israeli-occupied) 'security zone' will not change no matter what the considerations are," Dallul said.

"We refuse a repeat of the Marj al-Zuhur experience," he said.

In 1992, Israel deported 415 HAMAS activists to Lebanon. They stayed one year in a tent camp in no-man's land just north of the Israeli-held border security zone in south Lebanon until they were allowed back amid international condemnation.

Dallul said extra measures had been taken at five crossing points in the western al-Biqa' and south Lebanon, linking the occupied zone with the rest of the country, but did not give further details.

Ten days ago the army deployed reinforcements north of the zone and built a sand barrier at the Zummarayya checkpoint at Marj al- Zuhur, barring motorists from entering or leaving the Israeli- occupied buffer strip.

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Over the past two days it also dispatched armoured vehicles to Zummarayya.

Israel's proxy South Lebanon Army (SLA) reciprocated by shutting its side of Zummarayya.

Peres told the Israeli cabinet Sunday he supported calls to expel members of the Islamic Resistance Movement (HAMAS) and the Islamic Jihad directly implicated in anti-Israeli attacks, following a spate of suicide bombings in Israel which left 61 dead in less than two weeks.

Government sources said Peres would take a decision after Shin Beth, the internal intelligency agency, submitted names of detained militants it wanted deported.

HAMAS on Sunday warned Israel against carrying out more deportations. "We will not let it go unpunished," the group said.

Such deportations are prohibited by the 1945 Geneva Convention protecting the rights of populations living under occupation.

Lebanon: Goksel--'No Unusual' Military Movements in South

NC1903123296 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1130 GMT 19 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Timur Goksel, official spokesman for the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon [UNIFIL], has stated that UNIFIL has not seen any Palestinian deportees from Israel. Goksel said there have been no unusual military movements in the occupied border zone in the last few days.

Lebanon: Hizballah Figure Says Relations With Syria 'Very Good'

NC1803204096 Paris AFP in English 1808 GMT 18 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Beirut, March 18 (AFP) — The Hizballah guerrilla group said Monday [18 March] it had very good relations with Syria, which were improving all the time.

"Syria's support for our cause is clear and public, that is very important," Hizballah's deputy chief Shaykh Na'im Qasim told AFP. Relations are "very good" and "constantly improving," he said.

"Our positions and those of Damascus are the same on most political issues concerning Lebanon in particular and the Middle East in general," he said.

"All I need as proof is the fact that Syria is resisting U.S. pressure over Hizballah's armed resistance" to Israel in the self-declared "security zone" occupied by the Jewish state in south Lebanon.

Israel and the United States have demanded the disarmament of the Shiite Moslem fundamentalist group, which receives material support from Iran, and have called on Syria to do it.

Syria deploys 35,000 troops over three-quarters of Lebanese territory and is the main foreign power-broker in Beirut.

"We have Syria's moral and political support, but not its material support. Damascus facilitates our activity on the ground in the regions where its troops are deployed," Shaykh Qasim said.

Despite being a key player in the Middle East peace process, Syria is still on a U.S. list of countries supporting terrorism.

Syria and Lebanon boycotted an unprecedented world terrorism summit in Sharm al-Shaykh, Egypt, last week on the grounds it would serve Israel's interests alone and did not distinguish between terrorist activity and legitimate resistance to occupation.

Lebanon: Deputy al-Khatib on Fundamentalism, Media

96AA0155A London AL-HAWADITH in Arabic 9 Feb 96 pp 19-20

[Interview with former minister Deputy Sami al-Khatib by Zulfa Basila in Beirut; date not given; first paragraph AL-HAWADITH introduction]

[FBIS Translated Text] Former minister Deputy Sami al-Khatib has declared that he opposes any delay in implementing the audio and visual media law. He said that he opposes sectarian stations and supports the elimination of sectarianism. Officials must address the issue in a way that would minimize the losses and damage. Deputy al-Khatib challenged anyone to say that a person was forced to change or not to express his opinion. He said that interference in the compilation of candidate lists could take place, and this is happening and will always happen in Lebanon. Deputy al-Khatib made these remarks in an interview with AL-HAWADITH. The text of the interview follows:

[Basila] What is your position in the debate regarding the reorganization of the audio and visual media?

[Al-Khatib] I do not own a television or a radio station, and there is no hope that I will. I do not know how the debate will proceed. We are undoubtedly facing a difficult problem. We must try to minimize the state's losses, safeguard its dignity, and respect legislation. At the same time, we must ensure a minimum level of freedoms and safeguard the interests of the media people. They earn their living from the media. They are

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an important group whom we cannot ignore. If we can reconcile between these problems, we can reach a good solution that will satisfy all the parties.

We have a media law that has no parallel in the Arab countries. It is as good as any media law in Europe and America. We debated this law repeatedly over a period of several months. We believed in it and published it. We reject any decision to postpone its implementation, particularly Article 116, which established the basis for granting media licenses. However, we do not object to the submission of amendments to some articles of this law. I personally oppose sectarian stations and support the elimination of sectarianism. I am against perpetuating sectarianism through television stations. The important thing is for the officials to address the issue in a way that would minimize the losses and the damage.

How can this be done? The Chamber of Deputies can amend the law. The government must express its views on the issue just as the media people have expressed their views. These views might have been good, but this is not enough because they are one-sided.

If we cannot find a basis for agreement between the government and the media, the Chamber of Deputies can intervene and offer a new amendment to this law that could satisfy the people and minimize the losses. However, suspending the law is damaging to legislation in Lebanon.

[Basila] You supervised the recent elections, which took place after 22 years. How do you evaluate your experience? Do you support the issuance of voting cards? Can the Interior Ministry issue such a card before the scheduled election date?

[Al-Khatib] I supervised the 1992 elections. I am proud of this accomplishment because we held these elections after 20 years in which no elections were held in this country and the people lacked a voting culture. This is basic in any modern society. It enables the citizen to fulfill his electoral duty, which is the most important social and civil duty a person can exercise. When we exercise our voting right, we fulfill the most important duty, which is the right to choose the best. This makes us responsible for our choice.

We invited the Lebanese people in 1992 to exercise their voting right and participate in the elections. Some of them did exercise this right and some did not, taking a political stand. We respected this stand, but we did not accept it, because we wanted the people to participate in the government. More than 1,200 candidates ran for election, and 128 of them won. The losers were divided into several groups. Some of them knew in advance that they would lose, but they wanted to have their names on the electoral list. Some others lost because of a few hundred votes. Others lost, and they did not expect to lose. It is unreasonable for us to expect these people to praise the elections. Some balanced and sober-minded candidates lost some of their composure when they failed. The main problem in the elections was political and technical. My responsibility was for the technical part. We carried out the elections despite the difficulties. No one was prevented from exercising his voting right or expressing his views directly or indirectly. I supervised this process. I challenge anyone to say that an individual was prevented from expressing his view or was forced to change his view. Perhaps interference took place in the compilation of the candidates lists, which is normal and will continue until the year 2000 and 2004. All the political forces intervene in this process.

In the absence of a Lebanese identity card, we tried to ensure the integrity of these elections through voting cards. We got the approval of the Council of Ministers in February 1992 to print voting cards. As interior minister, I was asked to supervise the printing of these cards, which we did in a way that deters forgery. We made the cards from a special paste. No one can see what is written on them except through a violet ray. Besides producing these cards, we spent 56 days filling out and distributing the cards to the people. Thus, we ensured a 50 percent integrity in the citizenship registry. We punch the voting card during the voting. I think that the card was the only means for conducting secure and fair elections, based on the electorate register. This register has not been completely purged. We made the first attempt to purge the register, which goes back to independence days. We removed tens of thousands of names, based on a decision I made.

[Basila] Why were you excluded from the government formed after the parliamentary elections, although you were successful in the Interior Ministry?

[Al-Khatib] The formation of governments is subject to many local and regional calculations. Not only the prime minister is subject to these calculations, the ministers, particularly those who hold important portfolios, are also subject to these calculations. These calculations were not in my favor in 1992.

[Basila] How do you build your electoral alliances and on what basis do you do that?

[Al-Khatib] I build my alliances with people with whom I have a common denominator. The first of these denominators is our appreciation of the Lebanese identity and national affiliation. A good Arab is a good Lebanese. No one can begin his identity from the top. He must be good in his family, region, country, and

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nation. I would like my allies to know that I attach major importance to national allegiance and then pan-Arab allegiance. I think that the Lebanese people are the vanguards of the Arab nation's progress and prosperity. Although I was a military man, I hate dictatorship and military intervention in politics, because the outcome is not good. I respect all religious people, but I am not a fundamentalist and do not see in fundamentalism a solution to problems.

Furthermore, I think that we should agree on how to deal with people and serve them. We should also agree on the list of priorities to serve the people. Until now I have not noticed any major differences between me and my colleagues, who ran with me in the 1992 elections.

[Basila] Will you form an alliance with Hizballah?

[Al-Khatib] If the elections were held on governorate level and me and my colleagues thought that it would be in our interest to form an alliance with Hizballah and run on one list, I would not object to it, considering that Hizballah is a significant political force. However, this depends on the political balances in all Lebanese areas.

[Basila] We understood from what you have said that you expect peace to take place before the parliamentary elections. If this is true, how do you view the post-peace period?

[Al-Khatib] Yes, I do expect that. Peace is imminent. As for the post-peace period, we will face a complex situation. Peace will demand major changes, which we must face both on the electoral, political, economic, and other levels that will demand strong competition after peace. The existence of the Israeli-U.S. factor within the Middle East structure will affect our lives. Lebanon has built its legal, government, and economic systems based on enmity to Israel. When peace is established and normalization becomes part of peace, all these factors must change. A new situation will arise. Here lies the importance of the coming period, which will open the way to strong economic competition. Economic wars and competition will develop between European, Arab, and U.S. forces. The factor of Zionist money and thinking will go into it because Israel wants to achieve what it could not achieve in war. The nature of the post-peace period will be complex. We must be fully prepared for it with 21st century mentality.

[Basila] Do you think that Lebanon is prepared to face these challenges?

[Al-Khatib] By its nature, Lebanon is able to compete. However, we must organize, guide, and strengthen this ability to compete better. If we leave matters to individuals, we will become like the expatriates. The Lebanese abroad has built empires, but if he tries to organize his affairs, he will fail.

[Basila] What do you suggest to organize it?

[Al-Khatib] Undoubtedly, the state, the government, and the Chamber of Deputies must work to strengthen the various capable and creative sectors. They must create ways, methods, and legislation to enable us to face this period. I do not think Lebanon is capable enough to face this period. What is delaying any action is that the state does not know whether peace will take place or not. Therefore, state institutions are continuing to operate without any future plans. Prime Minister al-Hariri established a 10-year development plan, which consists of projects to build a modern infrastructure, but he ignored plans to build a modern human infrastructure to face the 21st century — the century of knowledge, technology, skills, and ability to deal with the development of modern machines and other changes. We must change. We cannot continue to exist with prewar mentality. We must open the way to the young people to open up to the world and express their views. They can understand this era more than us.

[Basila] We are on the threshold of peace, and the hotel sector is still unprepared. Why has no effort been made to rebuild this sector, considering that it is a basic pillar of the post-peace period?

[Al-Khatib] Investors are afraid. The hotel sector depends on confidence in the government and in the future. The past few years did not convince investors that the situation was stable because of the boycott of the elections and the subsequent developments. The country needs to restore confidence to the public sector to encourage investors to build hotels and establish companies. I do not think that this would be easy. A government decision or decree cannot restore confidence. Confidence is built brick by brick, step by step, day after day, at home and abroad. Confidence is linked with political factors that delay its restoration, such as the Israeli occupation and the resistance operations. All these things delay the restoration of confidence. Despite the mistakes of the previous government, Prime Minister al-Hariri restored a large measure of confidence. This was manifested in the return of diplomats to Lebanon and the arrival of economic, financial, and tourist delegations. Tourism has contributed to confidence-building.

[Basila] How are Lebanese-Palestinian relations following the Gaza-Jericho elections?

[Al-Khatib] We have always respected and supported the Palestinian people's right to self-determination. The elected Palestinian people's leadership, which was the leadership of the PLO before, has abandoned Lebanon

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and Syria and reached an agreement in Oslo without the Arabs' knowledge. It has forgotten our sacrifices for the Palestinian cause. What it did was not in our interest, because it has weakened our position toward Israel and the world. Our relationship with the self-rule authority will be an Arab brotherly relationship, unless matters develop negatively and the Palestinians become allies of Israel. Then we will be in a competing position and will act accordingly.

[Basila] Are the Palestinian camps being organized to ensure security and calm?

[Al-Khatib] When we finish with the question of liberation and get to the peace stage, we will hold multilateral negotiations to discuss and settle the remaining issues in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Some of these issues are the borders, Jerusalem, the Palestinian refugees in the Arab countries, water, and transportation. All these issues will be on the agenda for negotiations. We will be present because some of these issues affect us directly. We will abide by what is decided in these negotiations regarding the Palestinian in Lebanon. Thus, the camps will be eliminated. If some of them want to stay in Lebanon, they must live like all Lebanese. We will apply the Lebanese laws to them without exception. Security, economic development, and laws will prevail. They will not live in a security island as they are now.

[Basila] Do you think that the Lebanese Army has become fully equipped and can control security in Lebanon, including the South?

[Al-Khatib] The Lebanese Army has undoubtedly moved excellent progress under its present command, General Emile Lahhud. It has become a modern capable and united army, to some extent. It enjoys strength, determination, good organization, and faith in the sacredness of its homeland and duty. The army, with its naval, air, and ground forces, lacks some equipment and electronics to ensure its ability to act and communicate.

[Basila] Do you think that the absence of this equipment is due to Lebanese financial reasons or foreign political reasons?

[Al-Khatib] The reason is financial. If we had the money, we would have bought this equipment. Some states, led by Syria, have donated equipment to us, and we thank them for it. However, these equipment are old. We still need many things.

[Basila] How would you deal with the resistance after peace is achieved? Would you eliminate it?

[Al-Khatib] The resistance is the result and not the cause of occupation. Had there been no occupation, we would have no resistance. We are proud of it, even if some violations are committed. The resistance made others respect Lebanon. We should credit the resistance for forcing the Israelis to withdraw from a large part of the Lebanese territory and confine themselves to the border strip. The resistance has prompted the other states to negotiate with us.

Negotiations would automatically begin with us when the Syrian-Israeli negotiations are concluded. We have begun preparing our files. Why would this take place after the negotiations with Syria end? It is because the Lebanese South got out of the control of the central authority in Beirut immediately after the Golan fell in 1967. Therefore, the return of the South is impossible without the return of the Golan. This is a political and military reality. After the Golan fell, all the doors to the south Lebanon were opened. The central government could not to impose its authority in this area.

[Basila] Some people have nominated you as the next prime minister. They say that Sami al-Khatib is a possible prime minister and is ready for the post anytime. What is your opinion?

[Al-Khatib] I thank them for their confidence and hope that I will not disappoint them. The premiership is a major national post. Anyone is entitled to nominate himself for this job. In Lebanon, this post is a burden rather than an honor. If Sami al-Khatib can fulfill this confidence, he will not run away from this major responsibility. However, I do not think that this is possible now.

[Basila] Has Shihabism disappeared? What do you think about President Fu'ad Shihab's political legacy?

[Al-Khatib] Shihabism has not disappeared because it has never been an ideological party or a group of people working in politics trying to achieve a specific goal and dispersing when they achieved it.

Shihabism is a method of government and a political view based on the Lebanese reality and message. At one point in time it included a large selection of administrators, politicians, economists, and professionals. This group was characterized by non-sectarianism. Its members were united by their love for Fu'ad Shihab. They respected him, and believed in his policies, integrity, and objectivity. After President Shihab's death, the political strength of this group declined. The war increased the division among the Shihabists. The political changes in Lebanon made the Shihabists a group of different people. Some of them practiced politics separately and others concluded new alliances imposed by the political and geographical reality.

[Basila] Is this the way to solve Abu-Muhjin's case?

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[Al-Khatib] The way Abu-Muhjin's case was presented was unsuccessful. The investigation showed that he was responsible for the murder of the late Shaykh Nizar al-Halabi. The security services should have continued their work in secret and not open the way for the Council of Ministers to intervene. The government is being blamed for this debacle because it has intervened in this issue. Therefore, I think that the government has failed in Abu-Muhjin's case.

[Basila] How is your relationship with Deputy Ilyas Skaff?

[Al-Khatib] Deputy Ilyas Skaff is a friend. We are on very good terms. I will not abandon him. I also have a good relationship with President Ilyas al-Hirawi. This encourages me to try to end the existing disagreement between them, and I hope to find a solution to it.

Lebanon: Al-Mir'abi, Hizballah Deputies on 'Resistance'

96AA0155B London AL-HAWADITH in Arabic 9 Feb 96 pp 21-22

[Report by Joseph Malkan]

[FBIS Translated Text] Beirut—Following the assassination of Yitzhaq Rabin, positive signs appeared on the horizon, which pumped new life into the stalled negotiations on the Syrian-Israeli track. Dennis Ross and U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher made several visits to the area, indicating the seriousness of the United States to revive the negotiations on this track. The U.S. efforts led to the resumption of these difficult and complex negotiations. Hope emerged from the gloom, caused by the Israeli leaders' intransigence, because the Jewish state was saying that what is mine is mine and what is the Arabs' is theirs and mine. They did not succeed. They faced a solid Syrian wall. Syria manifested a high degree of skill and shrewdness, sticking to its legitimate historical rights, relaying on the will of the one people in Syria and Lebanon. Syria stressed it will not give up any right, but made it clear it supports a just and comprehensive settlement. This has prompted President Clinton, during his meeting with President al-Asad in Geneva, to recognize the Syrian negotiator's methodology and principles.

According to Arab and Western political circles, the mutual optimism expressed in Israeli and U.S. statements, and later in Syrian statements, before, during, and after the recent negotiations, broke the impasse that prevailed on the Syrian-Lebanese-Israeli track. This is although some parties warned against over-optimism, because some Israeli official statements on the situation in southern Lebanon caused some concern among officials in Beirut. These statements noted that Tel Aviv will accept Syrian security in South Lebanon and al-Biqa' al-Gharbi to ensure the security of its northern settlements. This annoyed Syria before it annoyed Lebanon because it knew that this Israeli concern is a trap and a timed bomb, a policy Israel has always adopted to cause a rift between the Arab states. Admittedly, it has occasionally succeeded in this policy but failed on others.

Against this background, AL-HAWADITH has sought the views of four Lebanese figures. They were Former Minister Deputy Talal al-Mir'abi and Hizballah and Bloc of Loyalty to the Resistance Deputies Shaykh Ibrahim al-Sayyid, Muhammad Yaghi, and Muhammad Funaysh.

The negotiations on the Lebanese-Israeli track are still stalled, awaiting any tangible progress on the Syrian-Israeli track that can be achieved according to the wishes of those directly or indirectly concerned with it. The Syrian and Lebanese tracks, in the view of the Lebanese leaders, are correlated, connected, and complementary. They are, in Damascus' view, unavoidably correlated. In Tel Aviv's opinion, the Syrian track has the preference and priority because the Syrian track is a goal and the Lebanese track is a result. This explains Israel's view about Syrian security in southern Lebanon and Lebanon's anxiety, which was expressed earlier by the Catholic synod's statement. Deputy al-Mir'abi told AL-HAWADITH that the question of peace and the resumption of the negotiations are some of the basic elements that will determine our optimism or pessimism. The resumption of the negotiations does not necessarily mean they will produce definite results soon. Israel will always try to use evasive methods to impose its conditions, particularly on Lebanon, which is demanding the implementation of resolution 425 and adhering to the correlation between the Lebanese and Syrian tracks for the benefit of both countries. However, just and comprehensive peace is the only solution within the framework of the Syrian-Lebanese constants. Anything else is detail, which is subject to compromise.

Deputy al-Mir'abi has often been mentioned as a possible candidate for the premiership. He is an experienced politician. He thinks that time will tell how the current negotiations will end. He does not agree with people who make definite predictions because politics can always close and open doors. There is nothing guaranteed or firm with Israel, particularly in the spheres of negotiations and peace in the Middle East. He calls on the Lebanese side to work for a profitable peace for Lebanon, based on the implementation of the UN resolutions, particularly resolutions 425 and 426. Israel has no reason to impose conditions if it wants security and peace for all the peoples in the area and if it has really stopped thinking about its security alone. This will only

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show when Israel stops placing obstacles in the way of peace.

Regarding the national resistance, al-Mir'abi says this is a legitimate and sacred right and we support it with all our power. The resistance will continue until we liberate the last inch of our territory in the South and al-Biqa' al-Gharbi. He noted that the outcome of the current negotiations will determine the future on the various levels. The resistance will undoubtedly be affected by a just and comprehensive peace in the area because it is the result of the occupation and not its cause. When the reason for the resistance ends, the methods for national development and construction will become clear and defined. Everyone must have a role in these national fields. The resistance will not be confined to the rifle, when the reasons for brandishing it end.

Considering that the negotiations are always ambiguous and difficult with the Israeli enemy, Deputy Shaykh Ibrahim Amin al-Sayyid, member of the Bloc of Loyalty to the Resistance, does not see anything new in these negotiations. He does not think that the issue concerns the resistance and Hizballah because the settlements being worked out are a new plot against the Middle East and the Arab and Islamic regions. Any resolutions that come out will not concern us, al-Sayyid says. We will confront the plan to dominate the area, which is being worked out in these negotiations, because it promotes the interests of Israel and the United States. The Arabs will try to minimize their losses. We do not think that the Arabs and the Muslims will achieve any major gain in this imposed and dangerous settlement. We will confront this challenge. We are not interested in whether the settlement will succeed or not, because we think that what is happening is a new American attempt to dominate the area for the benefit of Israel. Therefore, we cannot accept the outcome. We will do everything possible to continue the struggle against Israel, establish our rights, and achieve our demands.

Shaykh al-Sayyid points out that the struggle against Israel goes beyond its withdrawal from South Lebanon. It is a cultural struggle, which will continue on various levels and in different forms. We will never accept a final Israeli victory in our area. We are not carrying a rifle that can fall in this struggle.

Shaykh al-Sayyid's colleague in the Bloc of Loyalty to the Resistance, Deputy Muhammad Yaghi, said: Our position, in principle, goes further and will not change. No just and comprehensive peace can take place, in the real sense, unless the Zionist Jews go back where they came from. Then the land will be completely liberated. What I mean is that they must withdraw from Palestine and not just from some places. Specifically, final and comprehensive peace will not take place unless the Jews withdrew from Palestine, because the problem will remain if they do not withdraw. What is happening now is a settlement that could be temporary, imposed by the circumstances. I think that stability cannot be achieved in the future, because the possibility of coexistence between the peoples in the area and the Zionists is very difficult and even impossible. The future will tell.

Deputy Yaghi thinks that something may have been achieved on the Syrian-Israeli track, but it is still unknown and unclear. Things are still vague. I think that major obstacles still exist. The two sides have not yet reached agreement on withdrawal to the 4 June 1967 lines. As long as this matter has not been decided, the problem continues. He notes that the Israelis want a big and high price for their withdrawal, and Syria, I think, will not pay such price. Consequently, a solution is still far. Optimism will not translate into reality in the Maryland talks.

Yaghi admitted that some progress has been made, but the extent of this progress is still unclear. He wonders: Have the two sides agreed on normalization before discussing the withdrawal issue? He affirmed that the settlement issue is one thing and peace, in its comprehensive sense, is something else. Even if neighboring countries have signed agreements with Israel, the peoples are not interested in that. A settlement can take place, but genuine peace is not guaranteed. The example is Egypt. A peace treaty was signed, but no normalization exists. Estrangement, repugnancy, and repulsion have increased between the Egyptian people and the Jewish entity. No relations can be established between the peoples of this area and the Zionists, who gathered in Palestine from all parts of the world. What happened so far has been peace between the rulers and not the peoples.

Yaghi said: I think no contradiction in views exist between the resistance and Syria. As a resistance movement, we think that the occupation of the land will not end except through the resistance method we have adopted. If the land is liberated, we will adopt a different position and new methods in resistance activity, which is not limited to the rifle. We will declare our position when the time comes, because we must not anticipate matters.

Deputy Yaghi stressed that Hizballah will continue to exist. Its situation now is better than before. The resistance is part of its jihad activity, which now takes precedence over all other party activity. The occupation of our land has dictated that. We will not continue the military resistance when the occupation ends. Resistance

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will assume different forms. We will confront the new normalization, cultural, and social invasions of our area.

When Israel talks about South Lebanon and its security on its northern border, it means the Lebanese resistance, and specifically the Islamic resistance. Therefore, Deputy Muhammad Funaysh, the third member of the Bloc of Loyalty to the Resistance, refuses to call what is taking place in the negotiations peace. This is not true. Peace cannot be achieved by forcibly taking away the rights of others and giving them to other people or nation not entitled to them. The current process was called a settlement figuratively, because it is not appropriate. It would have been better calling it the perpetuation of the legitimacy of the Zionist occupation of Palestine. This is because the process will perpetuate the usurpation and occupation of the land by force and provide compensation for the suppression, crime, and aggression. This is due to the nature and function of this entity, which is part of the arrogance [al-istikbari] scheme in the area. A settlement normally takes place between peoples or states that have a dispute over a certain geographical area or borders. A settlement takes place as a compromise solution. What is taking place between the Arab states and the Zionist entity cannot appropriately be called a "settlement [taswiyah]." What is happening will not lead to the restoration of the right to its owners as long as the problem of the rights of the Palestinian people exists. Consequently, I do not think that the process will produce peace, as some people claim. These are the initial considerations of the Zionist expansionist project, which is based on the domination of other people's land and our understanding of what is really taking place in this process. This process will not only confirm the legitimacy of the Zionist entity in Palestine, but will also confirm all the results of the imperialist project produced by the first and the second wars in the area and establish a new order, based on the principles of the imperialist project. It will make Israel, through peaceful and political means, the main partner in the political, economic, and development reality in all the countries in the area under the so-called Middle Eastern Order. For these reasons, we maintained a position on the negotiations based on our understanding of the nature of the enemy and its objectives and the American and Zionist goals, which are absolutely not in favor of the Arabs, the Muslims, the countries of the region and their peoples.

Deputy Funaysh thinks that Syria has its own considerations. As a state and regime, Syria's involvement in the negotiations does not mean that it views the enemy in the same way it is viewed by some Arab regimes or parties that negotiated and reached agreement with it. Syria is maintaining its principles. We might disagree with it and we might have a different position than the Syrian position. However, there is a clear distinction between the Syrian view of the Zionist entity and the Syrian conduct in the negotiations, on the one hand, and Syria's strategy, which reflects its position in the negotiations. Syria wants to regain the Golan territory it lost in 1967 and the territories Israel later occupied in South Lebanon and al-Biqa' al-Gharbi. However, Syria so far has neither made its position clear nor accepted the arrangements for a so-called Middle Eastern Order. Syria is engaged in these negotiations because of international and regional changes, but it will not allow the Zionist entity to become the main dominant power in the region. The Syrian-Israeli disagreement is between two strategies, projects, and roles for the future. Consequently, the Syrian-Israeli track is more complicated than the other tracks.

Deputy Funaysh linked the future of the resistance with the principles it was based upon; that is, the nature of the enemy, its expansionist designs, and its role in the projects being planned for the area in the future. He noted that the resistance, as a project and a spiritual methodology, will continue. Its methods, however, might change according to circumstances. The resistance continues to exercise the most advanced forms of confrontation and resistance to the enemy by undertaking the duty of defending our right in the land and resisting the Zionist occupation and its plans. We will firmly adhere to our principles and our view of the enemy and its expansionist nature, which have not changed and will not change in the negotiations. The enemy's project is based on a Biblical ideology and political interests of the Zionist movement. Therefore, the resistance is a necessity in the future just as it was in the past. Its methods will be determined according to the nature of the settlement and future circumstances. It knows how to diagnose the interests of our people and nation, since resistance is not limited to military action. He denied that there is any intention or a plan to clash with the authority if Israel withdraws from the South and the al-Biqa' al-Gharbi. The resistance will take precautions against all Israeli intentions and traps in this regard.

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Syria: Aide Hails King Fahd Speech, Criticizes Forum's 'Weak' Results

MM1803154496 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 16 Mar 96 p 3

[Report by Salwa al-Ustuwani: "Syria Expresses Satisfaction With Saudi Position, Criticizes 'Weak Results' of Peacemakers Summit"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Damascus — Syria yesterday expressed its satisfaction with the speech delivered at the Sharm al-Shaykh summit by Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Sa'ud al-Faysal on behalf of Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz. It expressed its discontent with and vehemently attacked the conference proceedings.

Dr. George Jubur, former adviser to the Syrian presidency and currently a postgraduate lecturer at Aleppo University Law Faculty and adviser to the Council of Ministers, told AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT yesterday that King Fahd's speech covered the basics of the Arab position, while the stands of other Arab states did not cover the Arab position in the required manner, as they just praised those who convened the conference.

Dr. Jubur described King Fahd's address as excellent, since he made a mention of the al-Ibrahimi Mosque. He was the only Arab to mention this, saying: "We condemned the al-Ibrahimi Mosque massacre and we condemn the massacres taking place now." He added that King Fahd not only condemned what had happened, but also spoke about the need to eradicate the roots of violence and to relaunch the peace process. And he spoke about the "roots" of violence, not the violence "phenomenon" — which corresponds to the UN and Arab classification of the causes of terrorism. King Fahd also addressed in his speech an important aspect, namely the need not to apply collective punishment or to equate the perpetrators of these abominable crimes to civilian residents, who are also victims of these crimes.

Dr. Jubur added that King Fahd did not forget to address the collective punishment applied by Israel against the Palestinians. He also spoke about the return to the Madrid conference, concluding his speech with his support for the Syrian demand contained in a memorandum distributed by Syria before the conference's proceedings. The memorandum called for the resumption of the Madrid conference. Dr. Jubur revealed that King Fahd's speech satisfied the Syrians, because it addressed the basics of the situation. "It can be said that it was the best speech in the conference."

Dr. Jubur criticized the Sharm al-Shaykh conference and its weak results, stressing that this conference will have an important impact as regards determining the region's future, even though nothing has been announced so far, that there are certainly things which have not been announced, and that the important point is the speed at which the conference was held and the swift response by the numerous Arab states which participated in the conference.

Besides, the summit statement was brief and was not worded carefully. It completely eclipsed the United Nations as an authority for the peace process and as a coordination organ. He added that Butrus-Ghali's participation in the conference achieved nothing with regard to the main issue, namely Washington's attempt to keep the United Nations out of the peace process. The funny thing is that Clauses I and II concerning consolidating security and fighting terrorism are almost similar and involve a military dimension. The only peaceful point is the clause concerning bolstering the peace process. Dr. Jubur said that two-thirds of the Sharm al-Shaykh conference's [work] was military — which gave the impression that there was a war. He added that there are "concealed aspects" of the Sharm al-Shaykh conference, and there are two important points which should be mentioned, namely that during the conference, which called for peace, Israel was carrying out military operations in southern Lebanon. The summit meeting did not dissuade it from doing that. And there is nothing to indicate that Israel has no intention of embarking on a military action. The second point is that Israel demolished the house of Yahya 'Ayyash's family. The house was demolished during President Clinton's visit to Israel. This incident is considered a violent act which took place in Clinton's presence on Israeli territory.

Dr. Jubur said that inviting Syria to the conference — held under the pretext of fighting terrorism, while Syria is included on the terrorism list — meant one thing, namely fighting Syria at the conference. He noted that the invitation "lacked diplomacy," as President Clinton should have removed Syria's name from the terrorism list so that its participation would appear normal. Furthermore, the conference erred in forming an open working group from among the participants only, since this represents an exclusive club for combating terrorism — a club that cannot be expanded to include other states. Jubur said that the conference was not far from the Madrid conference in terms of its structure, but the banner under which it was held was not right, nor was the timing. And the location in which it was held was almost provocative. He added that the next Madrid conference will not be comprised of angels, but, rather, of the same human makeup. Dr. Jubur expected the next conference to be held in Russia. Commenting on Israel's inclusion in the region's security for the first time, he

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said it is a prelude to coexistence between Israel and the Arab states.

Syria: Progressive Front Command Reviews Peace Developments

JN1803201996 Damascus Syrian Arab Television Network in Arabic 1830 GMT 18 Mar 96

[Announcer-read report over video]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Central Command of the National Progressive Front [NPF] held a meeting under Dr. Muhammad Zuhayr Mashariqah, vice president and NPF vice chairman.

The command listened to a detailed political report by Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar'.

In its meeting, the command reviewed the latest Arab, regional, and international developments, especially those related to the recent developments witnessed by the peace process on the Syrian-Israeli track. The command found in these developments clear Israeli retrogression with respect to the peace process, something which once again proves that Israel is not serious in this regard and that it adopts a policy of circumventing the basic raised issues and using events as a pretext to suspend the negotiations.

The command viewed the resumption of the Madrid peace conference according to the bases on which it was built as the appropriate framework to safeguard the peace process from the impasse it encountered as a result of the intransigent Israeli stands.

In its meeting, the command underlined Syria's firm adherence to the peace process and its serious desire to achieve a just, comprehensive peace according to the principles of international legitimacy and UN Security Council resolutions, a peace that restores land to its owners, gives each party its due rights, and provides security and stability for all in the region. The command viewed such a peace as Syria's strategic option.

The command studied the current Arab situation. It found that this situation was not in line with the magnitude of the challenges posed to the Arab nation. It called for reactivating the efforts to restore Arab solidarity and to reactivate the available Arab resources to restore the usurped Arab rights.

The NPF highly appreciated President Hafiz al-Asad's efforts in defense of the Arab nation and historic rights to safeguard its present and maintain its future. It viewed these efforts as an embodiment of the national and pan-Arab course to which Syria is committed and which is based on defending the Arab nation's supreme pan-Arab interests.

The command expressed great pride in the historic role assumed by President Hafiz al-Asad and which embodies the nation's aspirations, hopes, and eagerness to arrive a bright, dignified future, and to achieve its aspired pan-Arab unity.

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Afghanistan

Afghanistan: Rabbani Criticizes U.S. in 'Rare' News Conference

BK1803142096 Hong Kong AFP in English 1413 GMT 18 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] KABUL, March 18 (AFP) — Afghan President Borhanoddin Rabbani on Monday [18 March] slammed the United States for ignoring Pakistan's alleged support of the Taleban militia besieging Kabul and for abandoning Afghanistan.

"What is important is that the United States, despite the fact they knew Pakistan was arming and supplying the Taleban, remained silent on the issue," he said.

The president, at a rare press conference here, stressed that his government had no proof that Washington was directly or indirectly supporting the Taleban, but charged it had turned a blind eye to Pakistan's alleged backing of the Islamic warriors.

"We would like to stress that the Pakistanis are deeply involved in lavishly financing and equipping the Taleban phenomenon which has led to insecurity in some parts of the country," he claimed.

"But we do not have proof or hard evidence as to whether or not the United States is involved in this affair," he said.

"This really was a surprise to us especially since (US Under Secretary of State for South Asia) Robin Raphel had been briefed on the Pakistani involvement in the Taleban," he said.

Pakistan has consistently denied backing the Taleban militarily, financially or logistically.

Rabbani told journalists that Washington had lost interest in Afghanistan in 1989 after Soviet troops withdrew from this war-torn country after 10 years of occupation and resistance to the "nightmare of communism."

Clad in a black cloak and matching turban, Rabbani said the Afghan people felt neglected by their former allies who lost interest in Afghanistan with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War.

"The United States has moral obligations and responsibilities to help Afghanistan, but they forgot (us) and even halted their humanitarian aid.

"If the United States were unhappy with the Afghan Islamic factions, what had the people of Afghanistan done wrong?" he asked during the nearly two-hour televised conference.

"They (the United States) should, from the very creation of the Islamic state, have recognised it" as it could have created a backdrop for immediate peace in Afghanistan, he added.

"Instead they watched the fighting in Afghanistan as if it were an interesting game of football. This was a matter of surprise for Afghanistan and was an unfair position which was contrary to our expectations," he said.

The United States has not recognised Rabbani's beleaguered four-year-old administration, which replaced the last communist government here and which is craving international acceptance.

Rabbani added that negotiations with the Hezb-e Eslami faction of ex-premier Golboddin Hekmatyar were continuing, but stressed that no deal had yet been brokered.

Insiders here say the two sides have been negotiating a military alliance and a role for Hekmatyar in the government, a move which could drastically change Afghanistan's political and military balance.

Afghanistan: Rabbani Briefs Journalists on Pakistani Support for Taleban

LD1803201496 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 18 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] [Words indistinct] President Borhanoddin Rabbani today gave a news conference which was held in [word indistinct] Intercontinental Hotel. BAKHTAR reports that the news conference was attended by a number of domestic and foreign journalists. [words indistinct]

In reply to another question about [word indistinct] support for the Taleban group, the Afghan president said: [word indistinct] undeniable evidence and documents which show that Pakistan supports the Taleban group and [words indistinct].

About U.S. support [for the Taleban], the government does not have any evidence or documents, but the Taleban themselves claim that a many countries, including the United States, support them. [words indistinct]

The issue of Pakistan's support for the Taleban was discussed with Ms. Robin Raphael, the U.S. assistant secretary of state, during her visit to Afghanistan, and obvious facts were put to her. However, she did not pay attention to the issue—that is, Pakistan's interference. If on her departure from Afghanistan she had looked out from her plane she would have seen for herself Pakistan's military support convoys for the Taleban group.

On relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan and the interference by that country's authorities in Afghan affairs, President Rabbani said: On the basis of its

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peaceful policies, the Islamic State of Afghanistan [ISA] is in favor of normal and [words indistinct]. Necessary steps have been taken in this direction but, the Pakistani authorities have not yet given a positive response. It will be in the interests of the people of the two countries if Afghanistan and Pakistan normalize their ties. However, by adopting unrealistic policies, the Pakistani authorities are not only preventing normalization of ties but [word indistinct] the ties.

In reply to another question, the Afghan president said: The ISA condemns all forms of terrorism. [words indistinct] supporters should not use it against any other government. President Rabbani added that since the setting up of the ISA government campaign against narcotics (?was continuing). The government has set up a high commission in an effort to implement in an orderly manner its campaign against production, export, use and smuggling of drugs. The commission has thus far taken considerable practical measures. [words indistinct]

The news conference was also attended by 'Abdol Aziz Murad, head of the presidential press office, and 'Abdol Rahim Ghaforzai, deputy foreign minister.

Afghanistan: 3 Injured in Taleban Rocket Attack on Kabul

LD1803164096 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 18 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Three people were injured in Kabul today when the Taleban group fired six missiles.

BAKHTAR reports that the missiles were fired from southern parts of Kabul. In addition to injuring three people, they destroyed three houses and [word indistinct].

Afghanistan: War Disabled Protest Taleban Attacks, Foreign Interference

LD1803195796 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 18 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Today thousands of Kabul's maimed and disabled people staged a march, calling for an end to foreign interference in Afghanistan's affairs and demanding guarantees of peace and security in the country.

BAKHTAR reports that the demonstrators condemned the actions of the Pakistani authorities and missile attacks by the Taleban group on crowded areas and residential districts of Kabul. They expressed their support for the peaceful efforts of the Islamic government of Afghanistan to ensure nationwide peace and stability.

The demonstrators also asked the Muslim people of Pakistan, the OIC [Organization of the Islamic Conference] and the United Nations to exert pressure on the Pakistani rulers to stop interfering in Afghan affairs and supporting the Taleban group.

They also presented a resolution to the UN office in Kabul stating their demands.

Bangladesh

Bangladesh: Ban Imposed Around Parliament House for First Session

BK1803162696 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in Bengali 1500 GMT 18 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The first session of the sixth parliament begins tomorrow afternoon. President Abdur Rahman Biswas will deliver the inaugural speech. Radio Bangladesh and Bangladesh Television will carry the president's speech directly from the parliament. Meanwhile, another 38 newly elected members of the sixth parliament have taken the oath. Speaker Sheikh Razzak Ali administered the oath to the new members at the Parliament House this morning. Those who took the oath today include 30 women members. Earlier, these women members were declared elected uncontested from the reserved seats for women. With this, the number of officially elected members for ordinary seats and those who took oath so far total 280. The remaining members will take the oath after their names are published in the official gazette.

Meanwhile, Dhaka Metropolitan Police, in order to facilitate the smooth conduct of the first session of the sixth parliament and to maintain peace and order at the Parliament House and adjoining areas, have banned the carrying of all kinds of fire arms, explosives, batons and other harmful and [word indistinct] objects, and the holding of rallies, processions and demonstrations. [passage omitted] The ban will be effective as of noon tomorrow, and will remain in force until the end of the parliament session.

Bangladesh: Opposition Leader Reports 'Partial Victory'

BK1803135096 Hong Kong AFP in English 1342 GMT 18 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] DHAKA, March 18 (AFP) — Bangladesh's main opposition leader Sheikh Hasina Wajed on Monday claimed partial victory, saying Prime Minister Khaleda Zia was forced to accept the concept of elections under a neutral caretaker government.

"She (Zia) had earlier said that only a child or an insane person could be neutral, but after the people

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campaign she has accepted and understood what is a neutral caretaker government," Wajed told thousands of cheering supporters at her Awami League party rally in central Dhaka.

Wajed added: "This victory is because of people's campaign."

Wajed arrived on a pedicab at the rally, amid a continuing nationwide strike, to mark the 76th birthday of her assassinated father and Bangladesh's founding leader Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

Rahman and most of his family members were killed in a 1975 military coup that toppled his post-independence Awami League government.

Supporters, carrying placards with pictures of Wajed and Rahman, followed her on foot from her residence to the rally chanting slogan "Joy Bangla" (Victory to Bengal).

Wajed also reiterated her appeal to President Abdur Rahman Biswas to present the Supreme Court demands to annull the February 15 general elections and call fresh elections.

"The president has betrayed the people by suddenly ending the talks and summoning the first session of the so-called sixth parliament," she said.

The opposition boycotted the February elections to the 300-seat parliament. The polls were dubbed as "seriously flawed" by independent observers.

On Friday, Biswas said if all political parties wanted he could seek the court's opinion.

Zia has accepted the opposition's main demands, including the holding of future elections under a "non-party" administration, but has refused to annull the February elections, which she said would make necessary constitutional amendments impossible.

She said Sunday that the constitution would be amended for holding future elections under a "non-party" government in the newly-elected sixth parliament which meets Tuesday.

Zia also said "at the moment we are not thinking of imposing (a state of) emergency. I don't think it is necessary now," but, added without elaborating: "Everything will depend on the developments."

Analysts here said earlier that with continuing violent political unrest, the government might impose a "state of emergency," and did not exclude a possible takeover by the military, which has ruled Bangladesh for 15 of its 25-year history. Wajed called for a "siege" of the parliament house Tuesday, labelling it a "black day" for Bangladeshis.

Senior Awami League leader and a main strategist Tofael Ahmed told the Daily Star newspaper Monday "If the government wants to remain in power by using force, there will be a situation like that of 1971 minus the armed struggle."

He added: "Anything may happen... Even there may be a civil-war-like situation."

In 1971 Rahman called for a noncooperation campaign against Pakistan, and then declared the war of independence which left three million Bangladeshis dead.

The strike has almost brought Bangladesh to a standstill amid widespread violence and fears of serious economic set backs.

Market sources said prices of consumer goods were increasing each day and the few guarded petrol stations open reported their stores close to depletion.

Business leaders have appealed to both Zia and Wajed to end the dispute and warned that otherwise there would be an economic disaster.

In Chittagong Monday, opposition activists hurled home-made bombs at the car carrying Shipping Minister Shajahan Siraj both on his way in and out of the key port to start operations, but he was unhurt. Police denied the attack.

News reports said in separate incident four persons died Sunday in different parts of Bangladesh in clashes between rival groups.

Bangladesh: President Swears in New 27-Member Cabinet

BK1903110596 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in Bengali 0955 GMT 19 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A new 27-member cabinet has been sworn in. President Abdur Rahman Biswas administered the oath to new ministers at a simple but attractive ceremony at the President House this morning. Prime Minister Khaleda Zia took the oath first. The prime minister and her cabinet had resigned earlier.

The new ministers are: A.S. M. Mustafizur Rahman, Mohammad Saifur Rahman, Abdus Salam Talukdar, Oli Ahmed, Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf, Tariqul Islam, Abdul Matin Chowdhury, Dr. Khondaker Mosharraf Hussain, Barrister Rafiqul Islam Mian, Abdul Mannan Bhuiyan, Barrister Zamiruddin Sirkar, [names indistinct].

The new ministers of state are: Major Sadeq Hossain, retired; Abdul Mannan; Lutfur Rahman Khan; Professor Jahanara Begum, Mrs. Sarwari Rahman; Harun al Rashid; Fazlur Rahman; Mohammad Aminul Haq; Dr.

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Abdul Moin Khan; Shahjahan Seraj; Maj. Reza Mohammad, retired; Hafizuddin Ahmad; and Amanullah Aman.

Among others, the swearing-in ceremony was attended by prominent politicians, eminent citizens, judges, members of the diplomatic corps, and senior civil and military officers.

After the swearing-in ceremony, Prime Minister Khaleda Zia visited the tomb of martyred President Ziaur Rahman and laid a wreath and said prayers there.

India

India: Interview With Finance Secretary Ahluwalia

BK1503061096 Delhi THE ECONOMIC TIMES in English 7 Mar 96 p 5

["Excerpts" of an interview with Indian Finance Secretary Montek Singh Ahluwalia by Sridharan Ramakrishnan; place and date not given]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Q: Critics say that reforms have benefitted only the class which consumes manufactured products because their prices seem to have come down due to competition. Agriculture prices were going up even before the reforms. So if you were to prove to a common man how he has benefitted, what are the indicators that you would choose?

A: First of all, I would choose the aggregate growth of the economy. Whatever you may say about who consumes the product, the fact is that if the economy grows at more than 6 per cent per year for two years running, that means a lot of income and employment is being generated. Now the data on employment bear that out. In the second half of the eighties, we created 5 million jobs each year. In 1995-96, we created 7 million jobs. And next year, the figure would be even higher.

The next very important indicator is what is happening to the rate of inflation. The common man is the most affected by the rate of inflation. The inflation rate today is the lowest in ten years.

The growth of agricultural production in the last four years has been quite remarkable. We had four per cent growth per year up till 1994-95. And 70 per cent of the population live in rural areas. During this period, there has been improvement in the terms of trade. Agriculture has got diversified, it's not just a foodgrain story. It's foodgrain, fruit and vegetables, even floriculture. So what's happening is a broadening of the base of economic growth and progress not only in urban areas but also in rural areas.

One more point, though we have progressed in urban and rural areas, there will be some part of the population that may not be able to benefit from this progress.

Q: You have mentioned about the low inflation rates. Even the low WPI [wholesale price index] is due to prices being held down, like that of fuel oil, for instance. So, do you see the inflation going up after the elections?

A: No, let me say that as far as the CPI [consumer price index] is concerned, it's not that it is high right now. The CPI for today is not known because the data come in with a time lag. So what you are seeing right now is the rate of inflation in the CPI for the end of 1995. We don't know what the February number will be. And my guess is that when the CPI for February becomes available, it will also show a significant decline in the rate of inflation.

A lot of people have commented that certain prices have not been adjusted. Now there are a lot of administered prices in the system. But as a proportion of total commodities, they are actually very small. The coverage of price control in India is very limited. The price-controlled part of the foodgrain market is less than 10 per cent. So, the foodgrain prices that are reflected in the WPI are not affected by the fact that a small part of the market is controlled.

As far as petroleum prices are concerned, one important thing that you must recognise is that though petroleum prices have not been adjusted, what needs to be done in future depends on what happens to the world prices of petroleum. And the current prospects are that the world prices of petroleum may be quite soft. Now if the international prices of petroleum products fall in 1996-97, and that's quite likely, then it may not be necessary to make adjustments in prices of petro-products.

However, even if we have to make some adjustments because after all even administered prices have to be adjusted it's not that just because we hold down prices, and the rate of inflation is understated. Whatever the inflationary pressure in the system, it will get reflected in a larger inflation in other prices. So the average rate of inflation will not be affected simply because you hold back some administered prices.

I feel, the decline in inflation is a very real phenomenon. The fact that some administered prices have not been adjusted is not a reason to worry.

Q: Do you think Indian companies have become more competitive in the last four years, and if yes, in what ways?

A: This has been one of the most important gains of the policies, and in some ways the full effects of the increased competitiveness of Indian industry is not yet evident. It will become more and more evident in the next couple of years.

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In what ways have they become competitive, well, I think in the first place they are much more conscious of cost-efficiency. The kinds of technologies they are choosing, the kind of modernisation and restructuring that is going on, and the kind of access that small and middle enterprises have to technology is much better than it was, say, 10 years ago, or even 5 years ago. Indian industry first of all faces a more rational tax system, with lower customs duties. They have much better access to technology. I think they are much more aware of the profitability of exports. As a result, industry for the first time is looking seriously at how it can export. And it realises that in the longer run, a significant export effort must be an essential part of a corporate strategy.

Q: The real interest rates in India are still one of the highest in the world. This, of course, affects competitiveness of industry.

A: It's true that interest rates tend to be a little high right now. To some extent this is the consequence of trying to follow a policy that brings inflation down. The rate of inflation right now is below five per cent. In the medium term, I would expect interest rates would also come down.

When inflation comes down, it takes some time before inflation expectations come down. And when that happens, it's possible to bring interest rates down without disrupting the gains on the inflation front. So, I expect in the coming year there will be a considerable easing of the liquidity position.

Q: A major reason why the liquidity crunch has come about is that the government's own borrowings have gone out of control. Besides hiking interest rates it is also crowding out the private sector. What is the government doing to ensure that this ends?

A: I don't think the government's borrowings are going out of control. The fact of the matter is that the fiscal deficit is much lower than it was four years ago. It's true that borrowings are high and perhaps ideally the fiscal deficit should be lower than what it is. I think it's a very important part of the continuing agenda. In the next few years we have to make sure that the fiscal deficit is brought down significantly. If we can do that, definitely it will have an impact on the interest rates. But please remember that the fiscal deficit today is not out of control. It has come down. But it would be better if it came down even more.

Q: So, in terms of fiscal and monetary policies what would you say is the unfinished agenda?

A: The most important thing on the fiscal side is that we should continue with our thrust on tax reforms. What we have done so far has demonstrated that you can reduce tax rates and yet you can raise more taxes. The ratio of tax revenue to GDP has increased in 1994-95 and also in 1995-96. I think that's a vindication of the strategy that we should have moderate tax rates, a more broad base and simplified tax structure and tight administration and enforcement. If we can do that systematically, I am sure we will have a much more buoyant tax revenue which will take care of a lot of our fiscal problems.

On the monetary front, frankly, I think as long as the fiscal deficit is under control, we will gain a lot of leeway with monetary policy. Right now the monetary policy has been on target. The growth rate of money supply will be around 15 per cent, which is what we thought was appropriate if we wanted a moderate rate of inflation.

Q: What about reforms in the capital and forex markets?

A: In the capital market, we made a very good start. We have strengthened regulations, we have radically improved the technology of trading. Both the NSE [National Stock Exchange] and BSE [Bombay Stock Exchange] have more or less modernised their systems of trading. So you have on-line trading, which is much more transparent and difficult to manipulate in terms of prices.

We need a major step forward and that is to set up a system of depositories. I am very hopeful that the central depository system will be in place by this calendar year. The ordinance is already there and we hope to pass the Bill. Regulations and bye-laws are being framed. So, sometime towards the end of the calendar year we should have the depository in place.

As far as forex markets are concerned, I think we have begun to get used to the idea that foreign exchange markets do show variability. The rupee has depreciated and appreciated and right now the rupee has recovered quite remarkably. We need a market with a lot of depth and more players in it. We need a much improved forward market, where premia can more reasonably reflect the underlying fundamentals. Much of this is a matter of learning by doing, and I think in the next year, we will see a much more effective forex market in India.

Q: Moving to PSU [public sector unit] reforms, it hasn't been as successful as the government wanted it to be. What is the plan now?

A: I don't know what you mean by "it hasn't been as successful as the government wanted it to be." Certainly, there's a lot of scope for more reforms. We have been trying to increase the degree of autonomy given to the public sector.

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Some of the PSUs have done very well in the last few years. We have encouraged divestment of equity by selling PSU equity in the market. This has brought in some private shareholders, financial institutions and mutual funds. I think this will increase the pressure on PSU management to have a more efficient performance. It will increase their concern to generate surplus. We have encouraged the PSUs to raise funds from the market directly. And that's a very clear signal. If you want to expand investment you must raise funds either internally or in the market, and both of these are possible only if the PSU is efficient. So, that's a very big signal that is going out.

Certainly, we could do more. There's lots to do in terms of increasing efficiency. I think that's part of the agenda for the next five years.

Q: What can we expect from the full budget after the general election?

A: I can't give you any indication of that because that's for the new government to decide what directions they want to follow.

Q: Assuming the same government comes back, and everything else is the same too?

A: The finance minister's budget speech gives an idea of what he feels should be the agenda for the next five years. And although it doesn't spell out everything in detail, the speech clearly indicates that we need to continue with the tax reforms. We need to continue with the restructuring and reforms of the infrastructure areas, and PSU reforms, banking and financial sector reforms. All these items are very much on the agenda. We also need to strengthen our effort in the social sector which is very crucial.

India: Home Minister Expects Lasting Peace in Kashmir 'Soon'

BK1603124996 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 16 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The home minister says that lasting peace will be achieved soon in Jammu and Kashmir. Mr. S.B. Chavan said that he had fruitful talks with the Kashmiri militant leaders and they have expressed their desire to give up violence and join the national mainstream.

Addressing the Congress-I party workers in Pondicherry today, he accused Pakistan of trying to create instability by helping militant and Naxalite outfits in the country. Mr. Chavan said secularism, stability and safety of minorities alone can help build a peaceful and strong India. He said the policies and programs followed by the center have started yielding results. The new economic policy has strengthened the economy and the country is now holding a comfortable foreign exchange reserve, he added.

Iran

Iran: Foreign Ministry Denies German Allegations Against Minister

LD1603214996 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 2030 GMT 16 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Foreign Ministry of the Islamic Republic of Iran has condemned the decision of the German public prosecutor to issue a warrant against Mr. ['Ali] Fallahian, the Iranian minister of intelligence and security, and described it as contrary to international norms and unacceptable.

Foreign Ministry Spokesman [Mahmud] Mohammadi has rejected all the allegations which formed the basis for issuing the warrant and said: There is no evidence or document suggesting any link between Iranian officials and the case being tried in a court in Berlin; rather, it is international propaganda and pressure from groups and factions opposed to constructive relations between the two countries based on mutual national interests — which have consistently tried to disrupt relations between Iran and Germany — that have played the determining role in the decision made by the German public prosecutor.

He added: Without a doubt, expediting work on the thorough and fair investigation of this case will assist in clarifying the facts, removing any misunderstanding, and doing away with baseless accusations against Iran.

Regarding a proposal from the Arab League Council about the peaceful resolution of the misunderstandings between the United Arab Emirates and Iran, the Foreign Ministry spokesman welcomed the continuation of talks with that country and said: Iran attaches importance to good-neighborliness and cooperation with its neighbors toward stability and security in the region and, for this reason, it welcomes the removal of the existing misunderstanding on the basis of the [UAE ruler] Shaykh Zayid's letter to the president of Iran dated April 1992.

The Foreign Ministry spokesman described fanning the flames of misunderstanding between Islamic countries as contrary to the interests of the Muslim nations of the region and, warning the countries of the region against raising claims which could lead to disputes, he called on them to display solidarity in order to impede the expansionist policies of the United States and the Zionist regime in the region.

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He underlined the Islamic Republic of Iran's right to sovereignty over the islands of Greater and Lesser Tunbs and Abu Musa in the Persian Gulf, rejected the repetition of false claims and prejudgements, and stressed the need for the continuation of bilateral talks without any preconditions.

Iran: Clandestine Radio—German Verdict Proves Tehran Regime 'Terrorist'

NC1903121696 (Clandestine) Voice of Iranian Kordestan in Persian 1500 GMT 18 Mar 96

[Station commentary: "'Ali Fallahian's Role in the Assassination of the Leaders of the Democratic Party of Kordestan, DPK, in Iran"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The catastrophic assassination of Dr. Sadeq Sharafkandi, the secretary general of the DPK, and his associates on 17 September 1992 and the protracted and conspicuous trial of those who managed this terrorist operation, including one Iranian and four Lebanese, has been monopolizing the international media and news agencies as a (?controversial) issue for some time.

The trial of the accused in what has come to be known as the Mykonos [name of the restaurant in which the killings took place] court has again won the attention of international news sources. Months ago the German publication FOCUS announced that the German federal prosecutor in the city of (?Karlsruhe) had initiated an investigation into the role of Iranian Information Minister 'Ali Fallahian in the assassination of Dr. Sadeq Sharafkandi and his associates and would soon present his indictment.

After two and a half years of the deliberations of the Mykonos court case, on Thursday 14 March 1996 the German prosecutor—in a valiant and unprecedented act—issued the international verdict for the arrest of 'Ali Fallahian, the information minister of the Islamic Republic.

This action by the German judicial apparatus was received with great pleasure and satisfaction by those who love truth and justice. The German prosecutor's decision requires assessment. First, if Iran has been able—by temptation and intimidation—to (?impose its will) on the deliberations and decisions of courts in various European countries and to mask its terrorist operations, the Berlin tribunal has, more than anything before it, exposed the true nature of the Islamic Republic of Iran's officials, a nature based on bestowing legitimacy and allocating importance to (?violating) international norms.

The DPK of Iran and all the personalities and factions of the Iranian opposition who have been the victims of the Islamic Republic of Iran's terrorist operations have endorsed the decision. That the prosecutor of a reliable country officially accuses Fallahian of killing the leaders of the DPK in Iran is an overt sign of the regime's disgrace and lack of credibility before the world.

With an international arrest warrant against Fallahian, something that is tantamount to acknowledging that Iran participated directly in (?the killings), those European countries that have continued their trade relations with Iran for material considerations and interests and kept quiet about the Islamic Republic's terrorist actions or tried to project that they have doubts about the clerical regime's terrorist nature will be unable to use the pretext of doubts to cover up for the terrorist actions of this regime.

Iran: Commentary Alleges German Incident U.S., Israeli Ploy

LD1803210596 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1553 GMT 18 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, in response to the action taken by the German prosecutor's office to issue a warrant for the arrest of one of our country's senior officials, considers it unacceptable and irresponsible. [passage omitted]

The German prosecutor's office is investigating the murders of four fugitive counterrevolutionaries, who were killed in 1994. The five accused in the case are to be tried in early spring. Those people, who were almost definitely victims of internal grudges, have been used for some time as propaganda tools against the Islamic Republic of Iran. [passage omitted]

Unfortunately, every once in a while there are accusations of Iran's involvement in such cases by governments which do not want Iran's foreign economic and diplomatic relations to expand, with the collaboration of counterrevolutionaries aboard. [passage omitted]

In the recent incident in Germany, due to extensive efforts by the United States and Israel to control and limit Iran's ties with Europe — despite the European leaders' repeatedly admitting to opposing the U.S. anti-Iranian plans — Iran's involvement has been mentioned. [passage omitted]

The murder of four Iranian counterrevolutionaries three years ago is now apparently a new incident and a fresh hue and cry which has been placed on the agenda to bring pressure to bear on Iran.

Of course, the German authorities have repeatedly proved their wise and sensible approach to various issues and it does not seem that Germany lags behind

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France in that respect. In the case of the murder of [former Prime Minister] Bakhtiyar the French government exercised self-restraint and made public the legal investigation of the facts.

Iran and Germany are two important countries in the Persian Gulf and Europe and various issues in their bilateral ties should not be the playthings of big powers and raw policies.

Iran is itself a victim of terrorism and the Iranian nation is the victim of official, declared and open U.S. terrorism. By resorting to various ploys the United States, aided by Israel, is bent on bringing about the political and economic isolation of the Iranian nation.

Iran: Cabinet Hopes Germany Will Not Set 'Dangerous Precedent'

LD1803212196 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 2030 GMT 18 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The cabinet, in its session, raised the German judicial authority's arrest warrant against the information minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran ['Ali Fallahian].

In view of the fact that the warrant has been issued on the basis of some vague and baseless claims and contrary to international norms and regulations, the cabinet announced: It is highly unlikely that the German government would be in favor of such an action, which is contrary to international norms and regulation. For they know well that if such illogical decisions were to become the norm, many personalities of the independent countries — including Germany itself — would be tried and condemned by the judicial authorities of other countries. No doubt the German government would not wish to set such a dangerous precedent.

Also during this session, held on Sunday evening [17 March], the cabinet expressed the hope that the German judicial apparatus will realize the incorrectness and dangerous consequences of this vain and unjustifiable action. [passage omitted]

Iran: Velayati Sends Protest Note to Germany Over Arrest Warrant

LD1903112696 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 19 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Our country's ambassador to Germany met yesterday the German deputy foreign minister and handed him a message from Foreign Minister Velayati to the German foreign minister. In his message, Mr. Velayati said that the action by the German general prosecutor to issue a warrant for the arrest of our country's intelligence minister ['Ali Fallahian] was against international norms and standards and was unacceptable.

Iran: Qom Prayer Leader on Sharm al-Shaykh, Majles Elections

LD1503161796 Tehran IRNA in English 1605 GMT 15 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Qom, March 15, IRNA — In his Friday [15 March] prayer sermons here today, Ayatollah Javadi Amoli, condemned the Sharm al—Shaykh summit and described it as an attempt to rid Israel of isolation.

The summit was held in the Egyptian Red Sea resort of Sharm al-Shaykh, to discuss what it called 'terrorism' and was attended by the U.S., Israel, some European countries and pro-Western Arab states.

Arab and Palestinian masses, however, denounced the gathering a cover to promote the interests of the Zionist regime at the expense of the oppressed people.

Ayatollah Amoli, addressing a large gathering of worshippers, praised the people of Iran for their massive turn-out in the Majles elections last Friday. He said that when it comes to the defence of Islam and the Islamic Republic, the people of Iran are out to defend its values.

Pointing out that it is the people's vote which safeguards the Islamic system, the Friday prayer leader of Qom urged the people to maintain their presence in the second round of the Majles elections in order to disappoint the enemies of Islam.

He focused on the grave responsibilities of Majles representatives and urged them to fulfil their duties towards Islam, the Islamic system and the people in the best possible manner.

In his first sermon, Ayatollah Amoli offered his condolences to the Muslim ummah on the martyrdom anniversay of the sixth infallible heir of the prophet, Imam Ja'far Bin Mohammad al-Sadeq (AS), and dwelt on the scientific and moral aspects of the imam's character.

Imam Sadeq, was 65 years old at the time of his martyrdom through poisoning in 148 a.h. (765 a.d) by the Abbasid caliph Mansour al-Dawaniqi, who had greatly come to fear the imam's role in making popular among the masses the Sunnah (practices) of the prophet and educating them in Islamic Fiqh (jurisprudence) and sciences on the basis of the Holy Koran.

At its height, Imam Ja'far's famous school in Medina contained 4,000 disciples, among whom was the father of chemistry Jaber Bin Hayyan (gebr to medieval Europe).

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Iran: Press Views Summit on Terrorism in Egypt

LD1603095596 Tehran IRNA in English 0834 GMT 16 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 16, IRNA — Neither the summit on terrorism nor sophisticated spying equipment would be able to bring about peace in the Middle East, an English daily reiterated on Saturday [16 March].

Justice alone can make peace in the region a reality, 'IRAN NEWS' stressed in its editorial, adding that Iran would be more than happy to extend its sincere and active cooperation for a just peace.

Commenting on the recently concluded summit on terrorism in Sharm al-Shaykh, Egypt, it said U.S. President Bill Clinton and Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres failed to pressure other countries to condemn Iran as an advocate of terrorism.

Referring to the live press conference wherein Clinton claimed that European attitude towards Iran was changing, the editorial remarked, "the French president did not waste time and hit back at Clinton, saying that Europe favors and prefers dialog with Tehran."

IRAN NEWS added, "president Chirac's refusal to compromise with Clinton's proposal once more proved that Europe does not give a damn to what the U.S. President says during his election year."

It underscored that the final communique of the summit did not single out any country for terrorism and further stated that German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel also refused to name Iran as a perpetrator of any form of terrorist activity.

While emphasizing Tehran's condemnation of terrorism, however, it noted, "it is also Iran's firm and declared policy to draw a clear line between terrorism and the struggle against occupation."

It stressed, "the Zionist regime follows a policy of closures, sealings, demolitions and expulsions in the occupied Palestinian territories without taking the bitter fact into consideration that the people who have been made homeless will never sit quiet as long as they are refugees."

It concluded by saying that hopefully, American leaders and others in the U.S. would realize that peace in the region should be based on fairness and justice, instead of appeasing 12 million Jews for the sake of getting their votes.

Iran: Paper Reviews Sharm al-Shaykh Conference

LD1803183896 Tehran AKHBAR in Persian 14 Mar 96 p 2

[FBIS Translated Text] Yesterday, the United States dragged a number of heads of state to Egypt to counsel them to continue with U.S. plans in the Middle East, which are changing fast.

The Sharm al-Shaykh session was neither a propaganda maneuver nor a direct offensive. The United States wanted to demonstrate its persistence and seriousness about the Middle East and particularly to say that it denies anybody any rights in the region. Clinton's emphasis on open and undeniable support for Israel and his trip to the occupied lands demonstrates that point.

However, the Sharm al-Shaykh session was an opportunity for the United States to say that it wants to apprehend and put pressure on terrorists. Basically, it has time and again instilled, through the news media, the idea of terrorism in public opinion, at a semi-international session in the heart of the Middle East.

Also, as ever, Clinton was unable to convince his European partners to adopt a unified stand against Iran. For he has realized that the Europeans are not prepared to overlook a regional power like the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The Sharm al-Shaykh session lacked any political aim. In fact, it tried to link the economic future of the Middle East with the outcome of the [Middle East peace] talks. The United States and Israel have reached the conclusion that they cannot invest in a region full of armies and weapons and Islamic and liberation movements.

The idea of Arab money and Israeli planning is a manifestation of U.S. plans for the future political face of the Middle East.

The Sharm al-Shaykh session, after the Amman session, must be regarded as a political and economic turning point in the Middle East.

Iran: Paper Comments on Recent 'Anti-Zionist' Operations

NC1703182196 Tehran ABRAR in Persian 6 Mar 96 p 12

[Commentary by F. Asef: "The Palestinians Have Nothing To Lose"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The four martyrdom-seeking operations during the past 10 days that resulted in more than 60 deaths and dozens of wounded have put the performance of the Shin Bet, Mosad, and Shim'on

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Peres' government under question and, according to Middle East experts, they have even made the Oslo Pact face defeat.

The West and the White House condemn Hamas' [Islamic Resistance Movement] martyrdom-seeking operations as terrorist operations. But they do not react against the Israelis' excessive demands. For example, they remain silent on the fate of Jerusalem. And by inflicting pressure on 'Arafat, they demand that combatant forces be crushed, forgetting that the martyrdom-seeking operations are now boiling over from inside the occupied territories under Israeli domination and that the self-rule government's violent treatment of Hamas members can only lead to the emergence of new recruits from among Hamas and 'Arafat supporters in the self-rule areas.

'Arafat should bear in mind that Israel has made peace only with the PLO—a peace which, in Tel Aviv's opinion, should be coupled with the annihilation of the martyrdom-seeking Muslim forces. But it was these forces that made peace for 'Arafat possible with their anti-Zionist operations after the Persian Gulf war. Now these forces are being faithful to the rules of the game between 'Arafat and Peres. The PLO and Israel do not have any proof on the dispatch of explosives and martyrdom-seeking forces from the self-rule areas to the occupied territories. Also, most analysts point out that it is the extensive poverty and the Palestinian youths' feeling of powerlessness regarding the Israelis' unlimited violence that have pushed them toward the martyrdom-seeking operations because they have nothing left to lose. Therefore, in the final analysis, some of the people in occupied Palestine and the self-rule areas believe that they should either be partners in everything and be taken into account, while others believe that the Israelis should pay for the historic violence they perpetrated in Sabra, Shatila, Kafar Qasim, Dayr Yasin, southern Lebanon, and—in general—in the occupied territories.

Israel now has two alternatives:

1. It should either recognize Hamas' existence, in which case it should examine the group's demands—something that would be considered a great defeat for Tel Aviv;

2. Or it should begin a full-fledged war against Hamas.

The facts show that Israel has chosen the second alternative. Tel Aviv is well aware that the second alternative is the most dangerous one for Israel's existence because crushing Hamas will only hurt the feelings of the region's Arabs and will intensify the Islamist wave. Moreover, Tel Aviv will have to keep Israel's perplexed society in a constant state of military mobilization.

However, Hamas also knows that the West, America, and Israel will not remain silent. Maintaining internal harmony, not confronting the self-rule government, and preserving a social base among the deprived, young Palestinian masses are the most important elements for the continuation of the operations. Although the world may not consider the planting of bombs near people to be a principled act, this is exactly how Israel has treated the Palestinians, young and old, girls and boys, and children, while the entire West has remained silent.

If Tel Aviv does not understand the existing conditions for recognizing Hamas in the self-rule areas, the world will have to witness a new round that will entail the intensification of violence and the threatening of the peace process. This is because the Palestinian youths have reached the conclusion that "if we have to be killed by the Israelis, it is better for us to choose the way we want to be killed."

Iran: Paper Lauds Palestinians' 'Anti-Zionist' Acts

NC1703194896 Mashhad KHORASAN in Persian 10 Mar 96 pp 1, 11

[Editorial: "An Eye for An Eye: Palestine's Answer to Zionist Terrorism"]

[FBIS Translated Text]

A Discussion on Efforts by the Zionists and the West to Prepare Public Opinion for the Zionists' Avenging Operations Against the Muslims and Islamic Groups in Palestine

The wave of anti-Zionist attacks, the last one of which was on Sunday [10 March] in Jerusalem and led to nine deaths and dozens of wounded, has been welcomed by the Palestinian public and has overjoyed Muslims throughout the world. In the same way, it has led to concern and condemnation from the Zionist public and from most of the mass media and political circles in the West.

In reaction to the incidents, the Zionist ambassador to the Vatican stated: The tragedy that has befallen us now is unprecedented since the establishment of Israel. He added: We are experiencing the most difficult days in our history.

Meanwhile, the Zionist regime's ambassador to Italy desperately asked the European Union to act in order to save the Middle East compromise scenario, to use its strength to prevent the Palestinians' avenging operations, and to encourage them to stop their armed attacks. At the same time, the Zionist regime's permanent representative to the United Nations wrote in an alarmed tone

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in a letter to the Security Council, beseeching all countries and parties involved in the compromise process to do everything in their power to help Israel and to join in the Zionist regime's war against the Palestinian Muslims!

All these efforts manifest only a small portion of the concern and fear felt by the Zionist regime and Western circles about the Palestinian Muslims' fierce and revolutionary acts.

By disseminating pitiful pictures and news about the said incidents, the Western mass media has tried to paint an inhuman picture of the incidents and has tried to convince the world opinion that these incidents were terrorist acts, thus trying to pave the way for avenging attacks and steps by the Zionist regime against the Palestinian nation.

Arab and Islamic circles have also described these incidents as violent as well as revolutionary acts and recall that they are being perpetrated by combatant forces that consider violence to be the only way to confront the violence of Zionist terrorism. The Muslim public believes in an eye for an eye and in violence for violence. If the Zionist regime can riddle the bodies of Palestinian Muslims with bullets for wanting to defend their nation and for demanding their rights and can usurp territories and terrorize its leaders, the Palestinian Muslims can also resort to the only path they have before them—that is, revolutionary rage—in order to answer violence with violence.

Western political and media circles and the Zionist regime are trying to prepare world public opinion to support their imminent and avenging operations against the Palestinian groups. A spokesman for the Zionist regime says: In the same way that the public has sympathized with the [Israeli] regime over the recent explosions in the occupied territories (!), it should also support Israel's future operations against Islamic groups.

While condemning the explosions, Western newspapers' commentaries and reports have expressed strong concern that the consequences of these attacks will jeopardize the efforts by the West and the Zionists over the past few years in the Middle East compromise process. The London TIMES wrote in its editorial that three years of efforts to establish compromise in this area will be destroyed with the Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] members' decision to continue their bombings, thus creating a tragedy (!) for the Middle East and dashing the world's hopes for a peaceful solution to the Palestinian problem!!

The truth is that these explosions threaten to make the compromise process fall apart. But this is not tantamount to a tragedy for the Middle East and blighted hopes for a peaceful solution to the Palestinian problem. What threatens peaceful methods is the Zionists' imposition of aggressive war policies on the Muslims during the phase of political talks. If the Middle East compromise process is not coupled with the vindication of the Palestinian Muslims' fundamental rights, it will also be threatened with destruction because it will be coupled with the dissatisfaction of one nation and of an ummah.

The Zionists felt strong and happy about the assassinations of Yahya 'Ayyash and Fathi-al-Shaqaqi, but they should not have underestimated the rage and the threats expressed by the supporters of these two martyrs of the Palestinian nation during their funeral ceremonies. Today these explosions show that the Palestinians' martyred leaders will never die and that they will take revenge on the Zionists.

The West's mass media should know that the only impact that the nonrecognition of the Palestinians' rights to avenge the blood of their martyrs will have on the compromise process will be that it will be even further paralyzed. Rage for rage, violence for violence: This is the logic that rules the West and Zionism in their regional policy. And they are now facing the mouth-crushing answer to this. May the revolutionary rage of the Palestinian nation continue until the complete annihilation of Israel!

Iran: Dayton Accord, Bosnia's Boundaries Discussed

NC1503185496 Tehran JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI in Persian 11 Mar 96 p 16

[Political commentary: "Dayton—License for Ripping Apart Bosnian Borders"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Tadeusz Mazowiecki, a former UN emissary on the Yugoslav crisis, was interviewed by the Austrian newspaper DIE PRESSE and said the Dayton accord could be the beginning of a final and definite division of Bosnia-Herzegovina. He resigned from his post on 27 July 1995 to protest UN indifference to Serb atrocities in Bosnia-Herzegovina. He said in his interview that the cease-fire in Bosnia does not mean peace is established. Mazowiecki concurs with Bosnian officials that the Dayton accord is unjust and has simply halted the war without creating the necessary political and psychological conditions for a durable peace in the region.

Mazowiecki's remarks reflect the views and perceptions of those who have witnessed the bloody events and continuing atrocities in Bosnia for months at close

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quarters. He is stating that in view of the current situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina the Dayton accord can only result in a definite and final dismemberment of the country, which reflects the bitter reality there. When the next generations of Bosnians turn the pages of history they will remember it as the treachery of all the international organizations and governments professing to champion human rights.

Nonadherence to one of the important clauses of the Dayton accord, that is, the identification and prosecution of war criminals, is one of the main signs of the accord's lack of credibility and is being construed as a deliberate act of treachery by its formulators against the tyrannized Bosnian nation. Three months have passed since the accord was signed and all the war criminals who are allegedly being sought by the International Court of Justice [ICJ] at the Hague are roaming freely between Serbia and Serb-inhabited areas of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

For those who have been viewing Bosnian issues impartially and sincerely, the Dayton accord is an action undermining the Muslims and partitioning the Bosnian homeland to reward the aggressors. The accord gives 49 percent of Bosnian territory to the Serb aggressors. The Muslims, who constitute the largest ethnic community in Bosnia-Herzegovina, have been forced to share the remaining 51 percent with the Croats in an unwanted coalition.

Efforts are under way to make the Muslims abandon all their efforts to follow up the task of identifying war criminals and those who are responsible for the 43-month war, massacre of innocent civilians, and burning of all their life's assets.

Bosnian officials explained that this accord was merely an evil lesser than the continuing genocide of the Muslims by Serbs, with no other favorable point. Mazowiecki's remarks on the Dayton accord are irrefutable. The United Nations and the Western governments stand accused at the front of this dossier.

Iran: Elections in Sudan Said To Show 'Presence of Democracy'

NC1503185696 Tehran JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI in Persian 7 Mar 96 p 16

[Political commentary: "Elections—An Emphasis on Democracy in Sudan"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Sudanese people went to the polls in presidential and parliamentary elections yesterday. These elections, held simultaneously, were unprecedented in the seven-year tenure of General 'Umar 'Abd-al-Bashir's government.

'Umar 'Abd-al-Bashir, who was in command of the Sudanese Armed Forces on 30 June 1989, staged a coup d'etat against Sadiq al-Mahdi's government and took the reins of Sudan's administration. He accused Sadiq al-Mahdi of indifference to the country's deteriorating political situation and collapsing economy.

Throughout the six years and nine months of his rule his contumacious conduct has been the target of the wrath of the United States and its regional cohorts including Egypt and Ethiopia. This hostility prevented the Khartoum government from creating the right conditions in the country for parliamentary and presidential elections.

During this period the United States implemented many plots in Sudan, using malicious and malevolent adventurism to undermine the government. Sudan was placed on the list of so-called supporters of terrorism and subjected to U.S. political and economic sanctions. International financial and political institutions were prohibited from extending any kind of assistance to the Sudanese Government for combating poverty and the other problems of years of U.S. puppet governments. These governments fanned the sedition of the secessionists in southern Sudan, pitted the Egyptian and Ethiopian regimes against Sudan, and worsened the problems being tackled by the 'Umar al-Bashir government to prevent stability from being restored to this already impoverished African government.

None of these efforts made the country succumb to White House avarice. The Egyptians, who act as U.S. and Israeli surrogates in the region, have not hesitated to display every sign of animosity toward Khartoum's officials. The Sudanese Government's only sin is that it wants to continue its independent existence away from foreign pressures and dominance. The Sudanese people's only crime is that they are Muslims and wish to implement Islamic shari'ah in their society and in the pillars of their government.

In light of this it is very easy to recognize those who are pitted against Khartoum's national government on the political, propagandist, cultural, and military fronts. It would be fitting for the government and people of Sudan to be prepared to deal with constant confrontation and the various manifestations of plots, hostility, and obstinacy by the United States, Britain, and their regional lackeys including Egypt and Israel and their minions in the Organization of African Unity [OAU].

In such circumstances presidential and parliamentary elections in Sudan are of the utmost significance. Due to the ban on political parties in Sudan, candidates are contesting the elections independently. But this does not

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lessen the importance and credibility of the elections; it indicates that the Sudanese Government is strong enough to surmount all its problems. The elections in Sudan highlight the presence of democracy there.

Iran: Tehran Discusses Suspension of PRC Maneuvers

NC1603131996 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0445 GMT 16 Mar 96

[Commentary by News Research and Commentary Group]

[FBIS Translated Text] The PRC has suspended its missile maneuvers in Taiwanese waters. These maneuvers that began at the beginning of last week strained Beijing-Taipei relations and culminated with U.S. intervention.

Political observers believe that there are two main reasons for this unexpected decision on the part of the PRC. First, the fact that the U.S. entered into the Taiwanese dispute and Washington's efforts to internationalize this limited regional conflict reluctantly embroiled PRC foreign policy in an international tug-of-war, so the Chinese preferred to suspend their missile maneuvers in order to curb this trend.

The other reason, which suggests the reason for the suspension of these maneuvers, is that the PRC has probably achieved most of its objectives in staging these maneuvers. The PRC's political motivation in carrying out these missile maneuvers on land, sea, and air in the Taiwan Straits was to influence Taiwan's presidential elections, and to prevent the independence-seekers of this island from attaining power. The PRC believes that the current President of Taiwan, Li Teng-hui, and some of the hardline groups of this island are seeking to declare Taiwan's independence from the PRC by capitalizing on U.S. support.

Thus, it appears that Li Teng-hui's concern for the recent PRC maneuvers, which resulted in his altercation with Beijing, has convinced Beijing to conclude that its missile maneuvers had achieved the desired effect and had an impact on Taiwan's independence-seeking aspirations.

In addition, by halting these maneuvers, the PRC has gained a convenient opportunity to assess their influence on the positions and behavior of countries in the region and the Taiwanese politicians. It can, therefore, utilize the week prior to the Taiwanese presidential elections for a final appraisal of the most extensive elections in that country since its separation from the PRC in 1949 and to prepare itself for any possible threats that could result from these elections. If the extremist nationalists on this island gain power, Beijing will be forced to neutralize their secessionist aspirations by challenging them in a formidable manner in which war might be one of the options.

Iran: Commentary on Arab League Stance Toward Iran, UAE

LD1603172396 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1130 GMT 16 Mar 96

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] According to the AFP, foreign ministers of the Arab League, on Friday March 15, at the end of their session in the Egyptian capital of Cairo, once again stressed their support for the UAE stance toward Iran. The Arab League's ministerial council, in its posturings, expressed full support for any measure adopted by the United Arab Emirates to resolve differences with Iran. The council further called on the Islamic Republic of Iran to refer the case of the islands of Abu Musa, Greater and Lesser Tunbs to the International Court in order to peacefully solve the issue of the islands' evacuation. Iran has on various occasions said it favors the removal of misunderstandings between the country and the UAE through the continuation of unconditional talks. However, unfortunately, the United Arab Emirates, instead of holding earnest negotiations with the Islamic Republic of Iran, on different pretexts through propaganda ballyhoos, try to fulfill their idle claims. It should be reminded that differences between Iran and the UAE emerged in 1992 when Washington brought up hollow claims and has been going on ever since.

Beyond doubt, this issue can be solved through talks and peaceful means. However, it seems that Iran's efforts to invite UAE officials to hold direct talks with Iranian statesmen has failed to bear the intended fruits. The Islamic Republic of Iran, based on the principle that no country argues about its sovereignty and territorial integrity, deems its sovereignty over these Iranian islands indisputable. That is based on its due political situation and international conventions.

Political analysts believe that renewing of the disputes between Iran and the UAE in Arab League's foreign ministerial session is no great development. For what has been stressed in its declaration is once again mostly result of the union's irresponsible approach toward the issue rather than a logical stance. It goes without saying that such posturings are regardless of realities and unilaterally rather than being a move to resolve the regional differences. All this is in line with the alien

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forces' divisive policies in the region which in the end would entail none of the regional nations any good.

Iran: Radio Comments on Gulf Countries' Support for UAE

LD1803134496 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1130 GMT 18 Mar 96

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] According to the Islamic Republic News Agency, the foreign ministers of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council [PGCC] have again announced their support for the United Arab Emirates' claim of sovereignty over the three Iranian islands in the Persian Gulf. At the end of their 58th conference in Riyadh, the foreign ministers of the PGCC, while announcing their support for the UAE on this issue on Sunday, March 17, demanded that the Islamic Republic of Iran accepts taking the issue of the three Iranian islands in the Persian Gulf to the International Court of arbitration in the Hague.

The new declaration of the PGCC in support for the UAE on this case is, in fact, a repeat of their previous and permanent position in relation to Iran. Nevertheless, in the recent communique, there is a new point. They also claimed this time that the building and inauguration of an airport on the island of Abu Musa on March 10 was an unjustified and provocative act by Iran.

From Iran's point of view, the construction of that airport is only part of the development planned for the island which is under way to provide convenience and comfort for both the tourists and the inhabitants of the island. Naturally, such plans not only in no way pose a threat, but also help to expand regional cooperation and ease the trafficking of the passengers and tourists to and from the island.

About the elimination of differences, it should be said that Iran has reiterated its position on numerous times that it is ready to hold direct negotiations with the UAE officials and has taken practical steps in this regard to prove its goodwill. The dispatch of a delegation to Doha last November to prepare the grounds for high-level negotiations between the two countries is an example of Iran's goodwill to resolve its differences with the UAE.

Undoubtedly, the elimination of misunderstandings needs goodwill and political resolve on the part of both sides. That is why misguided positions and activities by the PGCC on this issue have not contributed to the resolution of this issue so far. Now, once again, it can be said from the irresponsible claims by the PGCC that the members of the council, instead of contributing to the resolution of differences, with their repeated and baseless claims, are actually serving the political and propaganda objectives of foreign powers.

The insistence by the PGCC that the UAE's claim of ownership of the three Iranian islands be taken to the international court is absolutely unacceptable to Iran. No country in the world would compromise its territorial integrity. The Persian Gulf Cooperation Council and their foreign supporters know very well that their position on this issue is not really in support for the UAE; rather, it is a means to destabilize peace and security in the region and an excuse to justify the foreign military presence in the highly sensitive region of the Persian Gulf.

Iran: Foreign Ministry Spokesman—Tehran Hopes for Talks With UAE

LD1603212196 Tehran IRNA in English 2108 GMT 16 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 16, IRNA — Spokesman of Iran's Foreign Ministry, Mahmud Mohammadi, said here today that Iran welcomed every initiave for peaceful solving of "misunderstandings between Iran and United Arab Emirates." He said Iran would anxiously look forward to resuming talks with UAE within the context of the letter of April, 1992 from Shaykh Zayid to Iran's President Hojjat ol-Eslam Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani.

He said Muslim nations in the region would be better advised to unite in bid to foil "expansionist policies in the region of the United States and the Zionist regime rather than present divisive claims against each other."

Mohammadi reiterated Iran's sovereignty over the Greater and Smaller Tunb Islands and the Island Abu Musa in the Persian Gulf. He also rejected territorial claims by UAE on those islands, but at the same time repeated Iran's willingness for talks with UAE without any pre-conditions.

Iran: Azerbaijan Seeks Iranian Expertise in Rebuilding Railroads

LD1603175496 Tehran IRNA in English 1722 GMT 16 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Astara, Gilan Prov., March 16, IRNA — Azerbaijan Republic seeks Iranian cooperation to rebuild and replace part of its railway network exposed to enchroachment of the Caspian Sea, Governor-General of Gilan Province 'Ali Akbar Taha'i said on Saturday [16 March].

Taha'i, who paid a visit to the republic this week-end, said that the Azeri officials called for cooperation of

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Iranian experts to link Azeri railway at Azeri Astara to Iranian Astara.

The governor-general said the foundation of the 7-km Astara-Astara railway has been worked out.

Iran: Qatari Foreign Minister Invites Velayati To Visit Doha

LD1703172396 Tehran IRNA in English 1256 GMT 17 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 17, IRNA — Qatari Ambassador to Tehran 'Ali 'Abdallah Zayd al-Mahmud here on Sunday [17 March] delivered a message from Qatari Foreign Minister Shaykh Hamad Bin-Jabr Al Thani to his Iranian counterpart 'Ali Akbar Velayati.

Al Thani pointed to the friendly and close relationship between Tehran and Doha and emphasized the need for development of regional cooperation between the two countries.

The Qatari foreign minister in his message has extended an invitation to Velayati to pay a visit to Doha.

Iran: Afghan IUP Official on Ties, Domestic Issues

NC1703190496 Mashhad KHORASAN in Persian 10 Mar 96 p 12

[FBIS Translated Text] The head of the Central Council of Afghanistan's Hezb-e Wahdat-e Eslami [Islamic Unity Party—IUP] spoke in Mashhad yesterday and explained the current military and political situation in the country. Referring to interventions by foreign countries in Afghanistan's affairs, he said: America opposes the creation of an Islamic government in Afghanistan.

Hojjat ol-Eslam val Moslemin Akbari pointed to Pakistan's support for the Taleban Group and said: After the victory of the mujahidin, Pakistan tried to bring a government subject to it to power in Afghanistan, and one of the major reasons for the continuation of the war is the Pakistani Government's efforts to implement a policy that will ensure its own interests in Afghanistan.

He said the Taleban Group's extension of the war from Qandahar to Herat stems from this policy and referred to the Talebans as a new phenomenon in Afghanistan.

The member of the Supeme Council of Afghanistan's Islamic Government said: Because of the deep roots they have in Afghanistan's developments, if the jehadi groups sit next to each other, the Taleban Group will also have no other alternative but to pursue the policies of these groups.

He added: The Taleban Group wants to gain power in Afghanistan. But since the nature of this group is ethnic, one ethnic group cannot gain the support of other ethnic groups when it comes to acquiring power.

He said: By interfering in Afghan issues, Saudi Arabia is also behind the Talebans.

He expressed thanks for Iran's peace-seeking efforts aimed at creating understanding among Afghanistan's jehadi groups and said: As a Muslim country and neighbor of Afghanistan, Iran wants peace to be established and the war and bloodshed to end. We consider the role played by Tehran in Afghanistan's developments to be invaluable.

He said that the devastation and damage caused by the war in Afghanistan are extensive and called for increased assistance to the people of Afghanistan from international circles and Islamic countries.

He added: By setting up a branch of the Imam Khomeyni Relief Committee in Kabul, some 2,000 families have been placed under the protection of this institution, and efforts are being made to help these families to become self-sufficient.

He noted that humanitarian aid from the United Nations, the Red Cross, and the World Red Crescent Organization to the Afghan people has been reduced as compared to the past 15 years. He added: The existence of a state of war and the drop in the allocation of credits to our country are among the other factors that have reduced humanitarian assistance to the people of Afghanistan.

Referring to the IUP's breakup during the past 18 months, he said: This dichotomy has created problems in this party's support for the people. But with the efforts that have been made, the IUP which is based in Kabul is in a better military, cultural, and social position.

He did not rule out the creation of a government comprising all the existing parties in Afghanistan and stated that the IUP will support such a government in the future.

He added: With the formation of such a government, national unity in Afghanistan will materialize, and the parties forming the government will have to express their practical support for the government and their refraining from war. He stressed the need for the unity of Afghanistan's IUP, and stated his readiness to step down so that this end will be achieved.

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Iran: Russian Envoy on Continued 'Peaceful Nuclear Cooperation'

LD1803100096 Tehran IRNA in English 0938 GMT 18 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 18, IRNA — The Russian Ambassador to Tehran, Sergey Tretyakov, stressed that Russia continues peaceful nuclear cooperation with Iran.

In an interview printed in the English daily TEHRAN TIMES Monday [18 March], he said that according to the agreements between the two countries in 1992, Moscow and Tehran intend to extend their nuclear cooperation after the completion of the nuclear plant in the southern Persian Gulf port of Bushehr.

The Russian experts began work in November to "complete a civilian nuclear power plant in Bushehr that was switched on by the Germany but left unfinished following the Islamic revolution."

"So far Russian leaders have not cared U.S. pressure because their position is not understandable to us," the ambassador underlined.

"Nuclear research for peaceful scientific purposes, is the next step to be taken by the two countries in peaceful nuclear cooperation," he concluded.

Iran: Filipino Speaker Invites Nateq Nuri To Visit Manila

LD1803115996 Tehran IRNA in English 1044 GMT 18 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 18, IRNA — Filipino Speaker Jose de Venecia, in a meeting on Monday [18 March] with the visiting Iranian deputy foreign minister for Asia-Pasfic, Ala'eddin Borujerdi, invited the Iranian speaker, Ali Akbar Nateq Nuri, to pay an official visit to Manila.

De Venecia emphasizing expansion of Tehran-Manila relations, lauded the Islamic Republic of Iran for its extensive efforts in solving problems of the Muslim people in the Philippines.

Borujerdi referring to the fruitful outcome of exchange of visits between heads of the two nations and Filipino speaker's visit to Tehran, said that the ground has now been prepared for further deepening of ties between the two countries.

Iran: Ministry Spokesman Dismisses 'Arafat Statement on Occupied Lands

LD1803133896 Tehran IRNA in English 1312 GMT 18 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 18, IRNA — The Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman, Mahmud Mohammadi here on Monday [18 March] dismissed Yasir 'Arafat's statement attributing the domestic problems of the occupied lands to Iran. Mohammadi, referring to the oppression imposed by the Zionist occupation forces and 'Arafat on Palestinian women and children, expressed surprise at the closeness of views between 'Arafat and the Zionist regime against the Islamic Republic of Iran. He also expressed hope that 'Arafat would not make bigger blunder.

He said the inability of the Palestine Authority (PA) to vindicate the rights of the Palestinian nation has led to the closeness of its views with the Zionist regime and further suppression of Palestinians.

Mohammadi said that had there not been the resistance and devotions of Palestinian women and children and had world Muslims not supported the righteous struggles of the Palestinian people, even the Zionist regime would not have been ready to enter into negotiations with an organization that is witnessing the sufferings of Palestinian Muslims from the capitals of European countries.

Iran: IGRC Commander Slams U.S. Efforts at Sharm al-Shaykh Forum

LD1603154196 Tehran IRNA in English 1523 GMT 16 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Qom, Central Prov., March 16, IRNA — Commander of the Islamic Revolution's Guards corps (IRGC) Major General Mohsen Reza'i said here on Friday [15 March] that Sharm al-Shaykh summit meet was a futile effort by the U.S. for campaign against terrorism.

Reza'i said that American statesmen were benefitting from terrorism more than any other country to achieve their goals.

He said that the U.S. efforts aimed at exerting pressure on Iran had failed following European countries' refusal to cooperate in this regard. He added that the issue proved Iran's political and economic strength on international scenes.

The IRGC commander stressed that Iran only morally supported the Palestinian revolutionaries.

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Iran: Official Says U.S. Must Revise Position on Tehran

LD1603201096 Tehran IRNA in English 1952 GMT 16 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Abadan, Khuzestan Province, March 16, IRNA — Deputy President of Iran for Executive Affairs Mohammad Hashemi said here Saturday [16 March] that Iran had foreseen the failure of Sharm al-Shaykh conference because "the U.S. had a totally erroneous understanding about Iran."

He said Washington would eventually have to revise its position about the Islamic Republic.

The Iranian official said Iran had never ruled out talks with Muslim governments and on the contrary was actively partial to talks with Muslim governments. He observed "every government able to appreciate the situation of Iran and her arguments would get a positive response from Iran."

He expressed hope that in the future Muslim nations would act more unitedly in their dealing with their common concerns.

Hashemi also lauded the masses for their participation last week in nationwide elections for the legislative assembly of Iran, and observed that the large number of voters as well as the substantial number of females elected for the Majles was proof of their having socially and politically equal status with men.

He said large numbers of candidates with different political and ideological platforms had participated in the elections and had tolerated one another in a manner that, he said, was proof of their political maturity.

Hashemi said because of the peculiar situation nationally and internationally the Iranian Government would have to proceed with national construction projects for development. He said the composition of candidates elected by voters in last week's elections also indicated the preference of the people for continued national construction.

Asked if President Rafsanjani's administration placed an emphasis on social equity in preference to economic development, the deputy president for national executuve affairs said the dichotomy was basically wrong since an Islamic society had both political, social and economic constituents and that national construction and development was a tool for social equity.

The deputy president of Iran also adverted to various infrastructural projects now being undertaken in Khuzestan province of Iran saying that once those projects are operational they would substantially promote the economic well-being of the province.

Iran: Minister Criticizes U.S. Interference, Supports Cuba

LD1703133496 Tehran IRNA in English 1224 GMT 17 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Mar 17 (IRNA) — Interior Minister 'Ali Mohammad Besharati said here Sunday [17 March] that U.S. interference in the domestic affairs of other countries is incompatible with international practices.

Making the remark in a meeting with the Cuban Ambassador to Iran, Enrique Rapallo Trujillo, Besharati added that the U.S. administration should know that world people are ready to sacrifice their lives to protect their independence and territorial integrity.

Besharati added that the Cuban people and government will defeat the hegemonic policies of the United States through their vigilance and resistance.

Pledging Havana's support for Iran's stances against conspiracies of the United States and the Zionists, Trujillo said that Iran and Cuba, as two independent and strategic countries, share common stances vis-a-vis U.S. imperialism.

The Cuban ambassador called for Iran's political backing for Havana's stance with regards to U.S. threats.

Iran: IRNA Cites Turkish Paper on Clinton Actions Against Iran

LD1903113096 Tehran IRNA in English 1106 GMT 19 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Ankara, March 19, IRNA — YENI NESIL, a Turkish daily, printed in Istanbul, wrote Tuesday [19 March] that Clinton administration will ask the Turkish president, Suleyman Demirel, during his visit to the United States next week to close the Iran-Turkey border customs.

The Turkish daily went on to say that such a proposition is based upon the policies followed by the United States to try to isolate Iran in the world and also bring about disruption of Iran's relations with the West.

YENI NESIL deduced that Bill Clinton intends to make use of Iranian issue as his campaign policy for the forthcoming US presidential elections.

The daily indicated that such a stand opted by the United States has been due to its failure in getting the world to adopt a common policy of sanctions against Iran.

YENI NESIL finally concluded that the Clinton administration will provide assurances to the Turkish president of compensating for the losses incurred as a consequence of the closure of Irano-Turkey border customs.

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by opening of the Iraqi market and oil pipeline passing through Turkey.

Iran: Paper Comments on Human Rights Situation, U.S. Criticism

LD1903101696 Tehran IRAN in Persian 13 Mar 96 p 2

[Commentary by Hamideh Fahimi: "A Number of Points About the Incident"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The U.S. State Department, in its annual report on human rights, claimed that in 1995, the human rights situation in Iran did not improve at all. Point 1:

The Americans have once again repeated their previous claims and, as ever, have not put forward any evidence to prove that claim.

"Killings without trials," "widespread use of torture," violation of the rights of women, and lack of freedom of the press are among claims made in the new U.S. State Department report. In the report, there is no reference to a recent visit by the UN Human Rights Commission special rapporteur to Tehran.

Point 2:

Professor [Maurice Danby] Copithorne, the UN Human Rights Commission special rapporteur, after his trip to Tehran, described as "excellent" the cooperation given him by the Iranian authorities. He said: I am satisfied with my inspection of Iranian prisons and do not feel that the authorities or any other people prevented my meeting the people. That stand, which was contrary to America's previous propaganda, showed that the Washington authorities would stop at nothing to influence the UN Human Rights Commission special rapporteur and would not easily allow him to report, impartially and fairly, on the human rights situation in Iran.

Point 3:

America, in its annual report, speaks of "violations of human rights in Iran" while it has on several occasions interfered in the domestic affairs of other countries, and continues to do so. One of the most obvious cases of such interference was the allocation of a budget to deal blows to the Islamic Republic of Iran which, unfortunately, did not encounter any reaction from international forums and human rights organizations. Those organizations and forums have also kept quiet about the open and repeated violations of human rights in occupied Palestine, and, influenced by the policies of hegemonic powers, have thus shown a green light to those powers, allowing them to make use of the human rights issue as a political weapons.

Final point:

Islamic Iran, contrary to most of America's friends and allies in the region, by totally adhering to the observance of human rights, has taken effective and invaluable steps toward strengthening the pillars of democracy based on Islamic principles. An outstanding and clear example of this was the elections for five terms of the Majles and the enfranchisement of the people to elect the president and members of the Assembly of Experts, while there is no reference to human rights in many countries that are subservient to Washington, in which elections have not been held even once and there is no sign of a parliamentary system. America's double standards in such a case is clear to all.

Iran: Majles Speaker Calls For Unity in Afghanistan

LD1703113096 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 17 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A group of Afghan Wahdat-e Eslami [Islamic Unity] Party Central Council members, accompanied by the head of the central council, met and conferred with the Islamic Consultative Majles Speaker Nateq-Nuri, today.

At the meeting Nateq-Nuri, stressing the need for preserving unity and solidarity as the only elements for surmounting Afghan problems, also laid emphasis on the need to strengthen the Afghan central government and called for the unity of all the mojahedin groups in order to confront the suspicious currents which are being fed in from outside Afghanistan.

The head of the Wahdat-e Eslami Party Central Council briefed the speaker on internal Afghan developments, expressed his support for the message by the exalted leader [Khamene'i], and declared his readiness to preserve the unity and territorial integrity of Afghanistan.

Iran: Majles Speaker Holds News Conference on Current Issues

LD1703182196 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 17 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Majles Speaker 'Ali Akbar Nateq-Nuri took part in a news conference this evening in the presence of journalists and representatives from the mass media. He expressed gratitude for the all-sided and enthusiastic participation of the people in the elections for the fifth term of the Majles and described it as unprecedented. Expressing his thanks for the

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advice and guidance offered by His Eminence Ayatollah Khamene'i, the eminent leader of the revolution, which provided the basis for the determining presence of the people, he said: The people, who have a profound link with the leader and the velayat [system of rule by a religious leader], always loyally respond in the affirmative to his calls.

He mentioned the serious rivalry between various groups in the elections as one of the other factors behind the people's enthusiasm to take part in the elections, adding: The other factor was that the people see the results and effects of the implementation of development programs throughout the country, that they love and have confidence in their officials and the revolution and, when they see that they have a part to play in their destiny and can choose freely, they participate actively.

Nateq-Nuri spoke of certain problems that had arisen in the course of implementing the election law, and stressed the need to reconsider and amend this law, added: By amending the law, precision will also increase [sentence as heard].

The head of the legislative branch of government described the examination and approval of the second development plan as one of the most important tasks carried out during the fourth term of the Majles, adding: On the admission of all specialists, the Majles carried out the best and most specialized examination of this plan, and both the government and the Majles must act within the framework of the policies and directions set by the law of the second development plan.

He spoke of the calmness of the fourth term of the Majles as one of its distinguishing features and added: The thing that is a source of pride for us is that the Fourth Majles carried out its mission to legislate and supervise with seriousness in a climate of total calm, and was free from any tension. The best criterion for assessing the performance of the fourth term of the Majles is the remarks made by the eminent leader about the Fourth Majles.

Speaking about Iran's foreign policy, Nateq-Nuri explained: Our primary policy is to have relations with all the countries of the world, except the United States and the Zionist regime, and, within this policy, neighboring and Muslim countries are given priority.

He added: The basis of our overall policy is to avoid tension; however, the interests of global arrogance demand the creation of tension in the region and they are terrified at the prospect of the expansion of ties between Islamic Iran and other countries. They are also afraid of the possibility that the culture of Islam and the Islamic revolution may be exported. They consistently conspire against us and make baseless allegations. Unfortunately, in the midst of all this, some of our neighbors do not have the necessary vigilance and are inattentive; whereas we are their best and strongest friend and we do not pose any threat to them.

Nateq-Nuri said the following about the double-standard policies of some European countries in their relations with Iran: Some of these countries, especially the members of the European Union, are under certain pressures, and they try to respond to these pressures in some way. They want both to have relations with us and also to express their misunderstanding about us in the form of criticism; and, ultimately, I feel that they are quite interested in establishing and maintaining relations with Iran.

Regarding the allegation that Iran supports terrorism made by certain countries, Nateq-Nuri stressed: The eminent leader and the officials of the Islamic Republic of Iran have repeatedly declared that Iran has, more than any other country and before any other country, been a victim of terrorism and it is a country that has suffered the most from terrorism.

The Majles speaker explained: We have consistently condemned terrorism and acts of terrorism, but the enemy uses this charge as a weapon against us.

Regarding the decision of the German public prosecutor to issue a warrant against our country's intelligence minister, he said: Although this warrant is based on a mistaken and unfair decision, nonetheless, the judiciary is independent in Germany and this warrant is not connected to the German Government. In the end, they themselves will realize that their decision was wrong. Of course, we have to wait and see how the German Government reacts to it.

Regarding the need for the formation of [political] parties in Iran, Nateq-Nuri said: I believe that there is a definite need for associations [tashakol] in our country, and I see the formation of parties as necessary in Iran. However, I have doubts about the extent to which parties can be successful in the framework of the country's particular religious conditions.

Referring to the extensive activities and measures carried out towards the country's reconstruction and renewal, Nateq-Nuri said: Fortunately, in the law of the second development plan, the Majles paid the greatest attention to the issue of workers and labor affairs and to the creation of job opportunities. It has included in that law everything needed by the country in this field.

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Iran: ETTELA'AT Views Reaction to Majles Election

LD1803193096 Tehran ETTELA'AT in Persian 12 Mar 96 p2

["Critical Commentary" (Naqd-e Hal) by Seyyed Ata'ollah Mohajerani: "A Simple Calculation?"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The executive secretary of the Islamic Coalition Association has declared that the aligned groups' candidates have achieved a desirable majority. Somewhat more meticulously, a member of the Central Council of the Islamic Society of Engineers announced a day later that with a simple calculation one can see that more than 70 percent of those who succeeded in the first round of the Majles elections were supported by the same group. Fortunately, the Coalition Association, as the most important of the aligned groups, published the names of nationwide candidates for the Fifth Majles in RESALAT daily on Monday, 4 March.

The list introduces 170 candidates; 30 from Tehran, 140 from provincial cities. There are several points worth pondering:

1. Of the list of coalition candidates, 41 have won places in the Majles in the first round of elections. Of those, 20 have also been supported by the Servants of Construction.

2. 64 of the Coalition candidates have been totally eliminated.

3. 26 of the candidates managed to get into the second election round.

Bearing in mind that the declared coalition candidates are in fact the same candidates of the Militant Clergy Association and other aligned groups, it is not clear how a simple calculation will show that they have attained majority. A simple calculation shows that, even without counting in the joint candidates in the first round, of the aligned groups candidates, less than 30 percent have won seats in the Majles, not 70 percent. [sentence as published] In other words, the form and fabric of the majority in the Majles will undergo serious change.

FOOTNOTES: 1 — RESALAT daily: 20th Esfand 1374 [10 March]

2 — RESALAT daily: 21st Esfand 1374 [11th March]

Iran: Weekly Journal Analyzes Majles Election Results

LD1803161096 Tehran BAHMAN in Persian 16 Mar 96 p 1

[Unattributed article: "The Fifth Majles Elections: Factional Differentiation, Political Women, Balance of Forces"; subtitled "Who Will the Left Coalition Support in the Second Round?"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The counting of votes has ended across the country and it is now possible to discuss some general results of the first round of voting.

1. The composition of votes across the country (except for Tehran): In the first round of voting 139 people entered the Majles from various constituencies. We can take the list of candidates published by the "Islamic Coalition Association" as our guide for those deputies who are associated with the majority faction of the Fourth Majles. From this list, 41 people entered the Majles, 64 were eliminated, and 26 went to the second round. From the 41 who entered the Majles, 20 had the logistic support of the "Servants of Construction" and must be therefore considered as joint candidates. Even if we take these joint candidates into account, and if we imagine full victory for the tendency associated with the majority faction of the present Majles, then from those associated with this tendency, a minimum of 47 or a maximum of 67 from the 241 possible deputies from the provinces will be entering the Majles.

2. Figures published about voting in Tehran indicate that people's political participation in the elections increased, (from 1.7 million to about 2.5 million people). The reason for this increase can only be the diversity among the candidates and people's greater scope for choice. As this scope increases, people's political participation and presence will also increase.

3. A study of the first 30 choices in Tehran — the first two of which have entered the Majles — indicates that: first, one of the two people elected is a joint candidate and the other one is the exclusive candidate of the "Servants of Construction." Second, from among the remaining 28 people, nine are joint candidates of the "Militant Clergy Association" and the "Servants of Construction," six are the candidates of the "Servants of Construction," 12 are candidates of the "Militant Clergy Association" and one (Dr. Hasan Ghafuri-Fard) is an independent.

4. The "Militant Clergy Association" is compelled to eliminate one person from its list (and chose 28 from the remaining 29 people on the list). Now, observers ask who is to be eliminated from the list? As a rule, and if the number of votes is going to be the measure for the

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decision, the last person on the list (Mr. Badamchian) must be eliminated. But it is possible that the "Militant Clergy Association" will make another decision.

5. One of the candidates who stood as an independent candidate and who was not on the list of the "Militant Clergy" or the "Islamic Coalition Association", but received a relatively high number of votes was Dr. Hasan Ghafuri-Fard. Taking into account that he is a member of the Central Council of the "[Islamic] Coalition Association" and the "Islamic Society of Engineers," the majority faction is forced to pay greater attention to his position. In other words, it seems that the "Militant Clergy" and its coalition groups must change the position of at least two names on their list, (eliminating one and replacing Ghafuri-Fard with the other).

6. The Islamic Left tendency, which participated in the elections under the title of "Coalition of Imam's Line", achieved a better position compared with the previous elections despite the fact that it had a relatively weak campaign and introduced some not-so-well-known candidates. This success can be put down to people's readiness to accept policies proposed by this faction and react to the monopolistic rule of the opposing tendency [the Majles majority].

7. The distribution of votes indicates that people have not voted for a full list. Comparison of the votes for the candidates of any particular list indicates that people voted according to how familiar they were with the candidates. They paid little attention to the fact that a particular name was on a particular list.

Iran: Servants of Construction Accused of Electoral Offenses

LD1803184396 Tehran RESALAT in Persian 13 Mar 96 p 2

[Fayyaz-Bakhsh, deputy for the people of Tehran, in an interview with RESALAT: "Tehran Municipality Officials Excelled Themselves in Electoral Offenses;" by RESALAT's legal and parliamentary desk]

[FBIS Translated Text] Tehran Municipality repeatedly used public facilities in the course of electoral activities and this is a blatant offense. Announcing this information in an interview with our correspondent, Ms. Nafiseh Fayyaz-Bakhsh, deputy for the people of Tehran, said: From the time when the Group of 16, which later was reduced to the Group of Six, entered the arena of electoral activities, there were anxieties that, in view of their official positions, this group would use public resources for electioneering purposes and this proved to be the case in the first round of the elections.

She added: For example, it has been heard that the order for the election posters of the Servants [of Construction] was given by Tehran Municipality to the Offset Company, belonging to the Ministry of Education, and, as these posters were being printed by that company on paper relating to the publication of school books, they were discovered by special electoral inspectors and the room containing the printing equipment being used for this purpose was locked up and sealed.

Ms. Fayyaz-Bakhsh added: According to reports, Tehran Municipality elements and officials repeatedly used the Municipality's resources in the course of the election campaign and this was even openly declared to be the case by the Guardian Council's supervisory board.

She said: Judging by the information that I have about the said offenses, I have to say that Tehran Municipality officials have excelled themselves in terms of electoral offenses and they did not balk at committing any offense in their bid to achieve their aims.

The deputy for the people of Tehran also said: The eminent leader [Khamene'i] and the honorable president had explicitly asked, sometime before the start of electoral activities, that officials should absolutely refrain from using government and public resources in relation to the elections.

Now that offenses in this regard by certain government officials have been confirmed and cases are being investigated at the State Inspectorate Organization and Tehran's administration of justice department, I hereby plead with the honorable president to issue the necessary orders for dealing with offenders so that we will not see the abuse of public resources by people who have access to them in the second round [of the elections].

Ms. Fayyaz-Bakhsh, who is also a member of the [Majles] committee on education, also said: I have a question to put to the education minister — regarding the offense committed at the Offset Company and the use of its facilities for the activities of the Servants [of Construction] group — which will be presented to the Majles today.

In conclusion, the deputy for the people of Tehran added: I would like to ask officials at Tehran's administration of justice department and the State Inspectorate Organization to deal with the cases of people who have in some way used government and public resources illegally as soon as possible and to publish the results for the benefit of the public.

Ms Fayyaz-Bakhsh ended by referring to the healthy climate in which the election was held and said:

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Mentioning these offenses is not to suggest that the elections were not held in a healthy climate. In my opinion, the elections for the fifth term were the healthiest elections in comparison with previous ones. The level of offenses has been very low. This is because the relevant organizations dealt with offenses seriously.

Iran: Caller Complains to SALAM About Quality of Candidates

LD1803214396 Tehran SALAM in Persian 16 Mar 96 p 3

[From the page giving readers' views through calls to the paper, and SALAM's response]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Unidentified reader] Hello SALAM, I would like to question the Guardian Council whether it can justify its action before God? Thanks to the previous screening process, the Fourth Majles was a disaster. Now one of the candidates the council has approved in our city of... [name deleted by the paper's editorial board], in his election campaign, was boasting about his capability as a good huntsman. He has said that he has the record of shooting the biggest stag, with biggest horns, in Khorasan Province.

Another endorsed candidate, in his election campaign, was boasting about his ancestors and their achievements. This is because this candidate has not achieved anything under his own name. Is it right that the Guardian Council should endorse such candidates? Are these persons qualified to become Majles deputies?

[SALAM replies] It is up to the people to decide whether these candidates are qualified and suitable to be elected as Majles deputies. If the people do not vote for such persons, no one can impose them on the Majles.

Iran: Voters Reject 'Monopoly-Seeking' Ideas, Seek Major Changes

LD1803224896 Tehran AKHBAR in Persian 14 Mar 96 p 2

[Viewpoint: "Lessons To Be Read From the Fifth Majles Elections"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The first round of the Fifth Majles elections has ended. Now, in view of the number of votes cast and the combination of the candidates who were elected in the first round, one can offer the following important analyses:

1. More people took part in these elections than previous terms of the Majles. This shows that the people have welcomed the open political climate, which was created in the months before the elections, and the endorsement of candidates with different views to compete in the elections. [passage omitted]

2. The independent and moderate figures will be the majority in the Fifth Majles. This also indicates that the people of our country are rejecting the monopoly-seeking ideas. It is also interesting to see that those candidates of the right faction who are more moderate than other members of the faction won more votes.

3. One of the most interesting features of this round of the elections was the number of women as candidates and voters. In most of the big cities, including Tehran, the female candidates won enough votes to enter the Majles in the first round. This indicates that the women, as a major section of our society today, wish to play a bigger role in the country's destiny and its progress.

4. The people's vote demonstrated that they are seriously in favor of seeing major changes in the administration and decision-making process of the country. The people's countless number of votes showed that they wish to see the continuation of the development process with greater speed. The people's vote is passing a clear message to the statesmen, that is, they should avoid factionalism, monopoly of power, elimination of rivals, and indifference to our national interests. The statesmen should, in practice, prepare the grounds for every member of the nation — irrespective of their ideas and diverse views — to play a part in the country's development and growth.

Iran: Subway Links Central Tehran With Imam Khomeyni Mausoleum

LD1803200096 Tehran IRNA in English 1641 GMT 18 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 18, IRNA — Tehran's first subway between the central square of Imam Khomeyni to the mausoleum of the late imam in southern suburban district of Tehran was put into operation on Monday [18 March]. A group of workers, managers and members of the board of directors of Tehran's subway were the first passengers of the newly-built subway to the holy mausoleum of the late Imam Khomeyni, the father of Islamic revolution.

They laid a wreath at the tomb of the late imam and offered their special prayers for the occasion of the inauguration of the first phase of the underground networks.

Iran: Mayor Karbaschi on Increased Budget for Tehran Municipality

LD1803095196 Tehran IRNA in English 0905 GMT 18 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 18, IRNA — The proposed budget for the Tehran municipality for

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the next Iranian year, to start on March 20, is rls. 1,330 billion, out of which rls. 900 billion is to be spent on implementation of development projects and the remaining rls. 430 billion on routine activities and services, said Tehran Mayor Gholam Hoseyn Karbaschi Sunday [17 March] night.

Karbaschi, speaking to IRNA, appreciated Tehran residents for their sincere and close cooperation with the Tehran municipality in implementing cultural and development projects in the current year.

Karbaschi said that the budget for the current Iranian year was rls. 750 billion but thanks to public contribution it was increased to rls. 1,300 billion.

The Tehran mayor further added that out of the sum rls. 800 billion has been spent on executing development projects and the remaining rls. 500 billion on the municipality's services.

According to Karbaschi, tens of development projects such as flyovers, roads and cultural and sport centres have been put into operation in the past 11 months.

Iran: Ilam Governor Says One-Third of Population Below Poverty Line

LD1803202696 Tehran SALAM in Persian 14 Mar 96 p 10

[By SALAM correspondent in Ilam Province]

[FBIS Translated Text] The governor-general of Ilam announced that currently one-third of Ilam's population of 500,000 people live below the poverty line.

Speaking at the First Seminar on Tourism in Ilam, [governor-general] 'Ali Akbar Sheybani-Far added: In view of the province's potential, the government should pay special attention to this border region.

He said: There are no modern hotels in any of the major cities of this province. Investment in tourism and the construction of tourist facilities, in addition to eliminating poverty, would open up the spectacular natural beauty of the province and its historical buildings to tourists.

Pakistan

Pakistan: Defense Official on Supply of Withheld U.S. Weapons

BK1803115796 Rawalpindi JANG in Urdu 18 Mar 96 pp 1, 7

[Report by Hanif Khalid]

[FBIS Translated Text] Islamabad — Under the Brown Amendment, Pakistan will be supplied with military equipment which is being withheld by the United States. Mazhar Rafi, Federal Secretary for Defense Production, talking to JANG informally, said that after talks between U.S. and Pakistani officials, to be held in Washington on 2-5 April to set up a time schedule for supplies, Pakistani experts will be sent to the United States to bring the equipment to Pakistan. Mazhar Rafi will head the Pakistani delegation in the Pakistani-U.S. negotiations beginning 2 April. Officers of the Pakistan Army and Air Force at a rank equivalent to major general are included in this delegation. Meanwhile, it has also been learned that the Pakistan Navy has been strengthened, and in case of war India will not be able to blockade the port of Karachi. It has also been learned that in the negotiations starting on 2 April, Pakistan will acquire three Orion-50 airplanes which Pakistan has already paid for. These airplanes fly over the sea at a very high altitude and work like radar. These airplanes will forewarn the Pakistan Navy about any movement of Indian naval ships or missile boats coming toward Pakistan through their computerized system.

Pakistan: UN Efforts for Afghan Peace Backed by 'Unofficial Troika'

BK1903111096 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 19 Mar 96 p 1

[Article by Shakil Shaikh: "Troika Backs UN Efforts for Afghan Peace"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad — As a result of marathon discussions held here Monday between the "three bigs," Pakistan will stick to the policy of "non-interference in Afghanistan," support United Nations efforts for a broad-based government in Kabul, and adopt an aggressive campaign to internationalise the Kashmir problem for its peaceful resolution.

The unofficial troika — President Farooq Leghari, Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, and army chief General Jahangir Karamat — met twice at the Aiwan-i-Sadr [President House] to reframe "basic objectives" of the country's foreign policy on two key issues — Afghanistan and Kashmir.

The meetings between the three were also attended by Chief Minister NWFP [North-West Frontier Province] Aftab Ahmad Khan Sherpao (Afghanistan meeting), Secretary Foreign Affairs Najmuddin Sheikh (both meetings), Secretary Interior Ilyas Mohsin and heads of some sensitive agencies.

The meeting started early and lasted till late in the evening, reflecting how seriously the top civil and military leadership discussed the issues confronting the nation.

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With reports that United Nations special envoy Mahmoud Mestiri was likely to be replaced shortly, the Pakistani leadership, according to highly-placed sources, did not find it proper to reopen its mission in Kabul immediately.

Supporters of Ahmad Shah Mas'ud had attacked the Pakistan mission in 1994 and then in September 1995, when Ambassador Qazi Hamayun and several Pakistani diplomats received grievous injuries. The meeting was significant because sensitive national issues were thoroughly debated for the first time after the appointment of the new army chief.

Sources say that it was decided to let all Afghan factions become part of a broad-based government in Kabul for bringing peace in the war-torn and faction-ridden Afghanistan.

The first meeting at Aiwan-i-Sadr, said the sources, was totally confined to remodeling Pakistan's Afghan policy with a view to observing the principle of non-intervention and providing no "special" help to any group.

The meeting also debated many intelligence reports made available to the participants of the meeting. Rabbani's defence relations with India and Russia were also considered.

In the second meeting, which focused on Kashmir, it was decided to aggressively internationalise the issue.

Indian talks with some obscure Kashmiri leaders were considered insignificant. "These talks have no credibility," said the sources.

The troika also took serious note of some highly inflammable statements emanating from New Delhi.

The issue of a working boundary and the Indian attempt to build a high-rise fence along the line of control also came under discussion.

Pakistan: Foreign Minister Ready To Accept UN Mediation on Kashmir

BK1803142896 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1300 GMT 18 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Pakistan has said it is ready for talks with India to resolve the Kashmir issued, provided the exercise is meaningful and result oriented. This was stated by the foreign minister, Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali, while addressing the central lawyers bar in Muzaffarabad today. He expressed his readiness to accept the mediation of United Nations in this regard.

In view of the previous rounds of talks between Pakistan and India, Sardar Asif said the process of negotiations should not be a ploy to gain time and an eye wash for world opinion. India should first stop repression in Kashmir to express its seriousness for talks. The foreign minister warned India against conducting fake elections in held Kashmir, which will further aggravate the problem. If Indian authorities think that by having talks with renegades and holding fraudulent elections they can misguide the world, they are living in a fool's paradise, he said.

Sardar Asif strongly rejected the third option on Kashmir, saying India is spreading such feelers just to misguide the people of Kashmir. The success of the liberation struggle lies in strictly pursuing United Nations resolutions on Kashmir.

Earlier, talking to Kashmiri refugees in a camp in Muzaffarabad, Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali said Pakistan will not be intimidated by the aggressive posture adopted by India with its preparations for nuclear explosion and development of ballistic missiles. The Kashmiris living in this camp had been driven out by Indian occupation forces from held Kashmir. Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali told the refugees Pakistan's stand on Kashmir issue and its support to Kashmiri cause is based on principles, and the entire world has now started realizing the need of solving the Kashmir conflict urgently, according to the wishes of the Kashmiri people. The British Labor Party made the resolution of the issue part of its manifesto. He said Pakistan has fought the case of Kashmir at every forum, including SAARC [South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation], Commwealth, NAM [Nonaligned Movement], and OIC [Organization of Islamic Conference].

[Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English at 1400 GMT on 18 March adds that the foreign minister also said: "Nuclear nonproliferation in the region and Kashmir issue are interlinked with each other, as the nuclear issue cannot be solved without resolving the core issue of Kashmir."]

Pakistan: Minister Asif Says 2d Nuclear Test India's 'Biggest Mistake'

BK1903090096 Islamabad THE NATION in English 19 Mar 96 pp 1, 9

[Unattributed report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Muzaffarabad — Pakistan, again invited India for talks for the peaceful resolution of longstanding Kashmir dispute. Foreign Minister of Pakistan, Asif Ahmad Ali, made this offer while addressing the Central Lawyers Bar here on Monday.

"We are ready for talks provided the exercise is meaningful and result oriented. He also expressed his readi-

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ness to accept the mediation of UNO [United Nations Organization] on Kashmir problem."

In view of the previous rounds of talks between Pakistan and India, Asif said, the process of negotiations should not be a ploy to gain time and eyewash for the world opinion. India should first stop repression in Kashmir to express its seriousness for talks, he added.

"India's insistence for unconditional talks with Pakistan is nonsense, besides the violation of Simla Accord which stand for talks on Kashmir issue. All the successful peace talks on Palestine, Golan Heights and Bosnia were held with an agenda," said the foreign minister.

He warned India against conducting elections in held Kashmir. The fake elections will further aggravate the problem. "If Indian authorities think that by holding talks with renegades and fraudulent elections, they can misguide the world, they are living in fool's paradise," he said. He said, due to internal problems India is trying to create war hysteria against Pakistan, amongst its people. The show of military muscles through missile tests and preparation for second nuclear explosion are the part of the same policy, Asif pointed out.

"The second nuke test will be India's biggest mistake. We will not let her steal any advantage if Buddha smiles for second time at Pokaran," he declared.

Asif while addressing the Kashmiri refugees has said, Pakistan is fully prepared to face, if India decides to make any military adventure against Pakistan.

"India wants to build tension on the Line of Control by frequent firing and rocket attacks. The number of occupation forces has reached seven lakh and the liberation leaders are being harassed by attempts on their lives," he said while expressing his concern over this situation.

Asif strongly rejected the third option on Kashmir. India is spreading such feelers just to misguide the people of Kashmir. The success for liberation struggle lies in strictly pursuing the UN resolutions on Kashmir. "Once India succeeds to amend the UN resolution for any other option the Kashmiris will lose their game the very moment," he declared. He also warned India that her efforts to seek solution of Kashmir problem on the pattern of East Punjab will not bear fruits. The Sikhs were fighting for autonomy and Kashmiris are fighting the right to self-determination, he added. Asif said, "Pakistan is not pro-U.S. country". But in the wake of post-cold war era, Pakistan-U.S. relations need to be redefined. "We seek level playing by USA between Pakistan and India." Pakistan treats the nuclear proliferation, a regional issue which should be resolved in the same perspective, he added.

Meanwhile, Foreign Minister Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali has said that Kashmir was neither territorial dispute between Pakistan and India nor religious war but it was the basic question of right to self- determination to the people of Kashmir.

Answering questions at a press conference here Sunday night he said Indian ploys were totally exposed to the world and whatever tactics she employed so far in this connection to hoodwink international opinion and to suppress Kashmiris have failed.

He said on the one hand India exploited minority card in Kashmir and telecast Hindu Pandits presenting them as victims of Muslim majority of the state while on the other she negotiated with defectors of freedom-fighters organisations. The foreign minister reiterated that rights of minorities in an Islamic State remained secured contrary to India where they were being denied and treated like untouchables, Sikhs and others, he added.

He said four renegades carrying forward interest of India in Kashmir represented none as they had been expelled from their respective organisations. Any how he made it clear that such episodes were not unusual during the freedom movements which were being manoeuvred by inimical forces to sabotage the movement through their hirelings as was done in Afghan jehad, he added.

He said Pakistan was committed to stand by Kashmiris and was taking all necessary steps to materialise their just demand of right to self-determination which was the only one option to settle the issue. He strongly contradicted the statement supporting third option which was attributed to him, and regretted attitude of some newspapers as compared to Indian journals which never misquoted their country's representatives.

Replying to questions Sardar Asif said Mehboobul Haq was the best economist who should stick to his subject. Besides he was not part of the government and should not interfere in foreign affairs of the country.

He expressed the hope that Indian dilatory mechanism would not last long and she will have to sit on negotiations table to resolve the issue to Kashmiris' satisfaction.

The foreign minister said that the government had projected the Kashmir issue at international level which had echoed throughout world for the first time, successful efforts of the government also shattered the iron curtain India had erected around Kashmir. The world community negating Indian flimsy stand was seriously taking notice of her atrocities in Kashmir which was now regarded as international problem instead of bilateral one as India portrayed it in the past.

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Commenting on Indian offer for unconditional dialogues with Pakistan, Sardar Asif said unless there was some agenda to be discussed the exercise would be futile and meaningless. He quoted examples of Palestine, Syria, and Israel who sat around table and discussed issues within the framework of working papers.

In reply to another question the foreign minister strongly denied that Pakistan had ever provided list of freedom fighters to any other country. He assured that Pakistan will persuade relevant quarters of UN to accord help to uprooted Kashmiris who also fall in the category of classified refugees defined by the world-body.

Pakistan: Defense Minister Criticized for Indian 'Analysis'

BK1803122296 Rawalpindi IANG in Urdu 18 Mar 96 p 10

[Editorial: "Pak-India Tension — Defense Minister's Optimism"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Defense Minister Aftab Shaban Mirani said that a war between India and Pakistan is not likely because it would be a very expensive venture and no one would like to indulge in it. He said that elections are due in India this year so the Indian Government is trying to gain political points by increasing tension between India and Pakistan. He said, however, that he believes that India will not engage in any adventurism. The defense minister also said we are considering the issue of increasing the defense budget but nothing has yet been finalized.

The Pakistani defense minister is a responsible person and is considered one of the most well-informed persons regarding our border situation, India's intentions, and the possibilities or fears of a war. Therefore, when he speaks about the security of the country, our relations with India and matters of defense, his remarks are to be taken seriously. When he says that there is no possibility of war between India and Pakistan, and that India is creating tension only because of its upcoming elections, his comment or analysis cannot be rejected readily. Otherwise also, no sensible person can wish that two strong neighboring countries should engage in a war. Pakistani people will feel relieved by this option of the defense minister. But looking only at the bright side of the picture is not appropriate for any government or personality. Realism requires that all aspects should be considered when talking about a sensitive issue like the country's security.

Everyone is aware that India is trying exceptionally hard to increase its military capabilities. It has conducted the 15th test of its Prithvi missile in January, and all military experts of the world know that Pakistan is the specific target of these missiles. India is also developing other long-range missiles. The chances of its conducting another nuclear explosion are also not eliminated. A few weeks earlier the prime minister also warned Middle Eastern countries against India's increasing military capability and its aggressive designs. On the Kashmir issue, India has made a new move. It has persuaded some so-called Kashmiri leaders to hold talks, and has clearly announced that in April, elections for state assembly and Lok Sabha are likely to be held in Indian-occupied Kashmir as well as other parts of India. This can cause extraordinary tension between India and Pakistan. And then, if the Rao government can create an impression of heightened tension to gain political points during elections, it can also take a few more steps to gain even more political advantage, and it is not hard to understand what those few steps can be.

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